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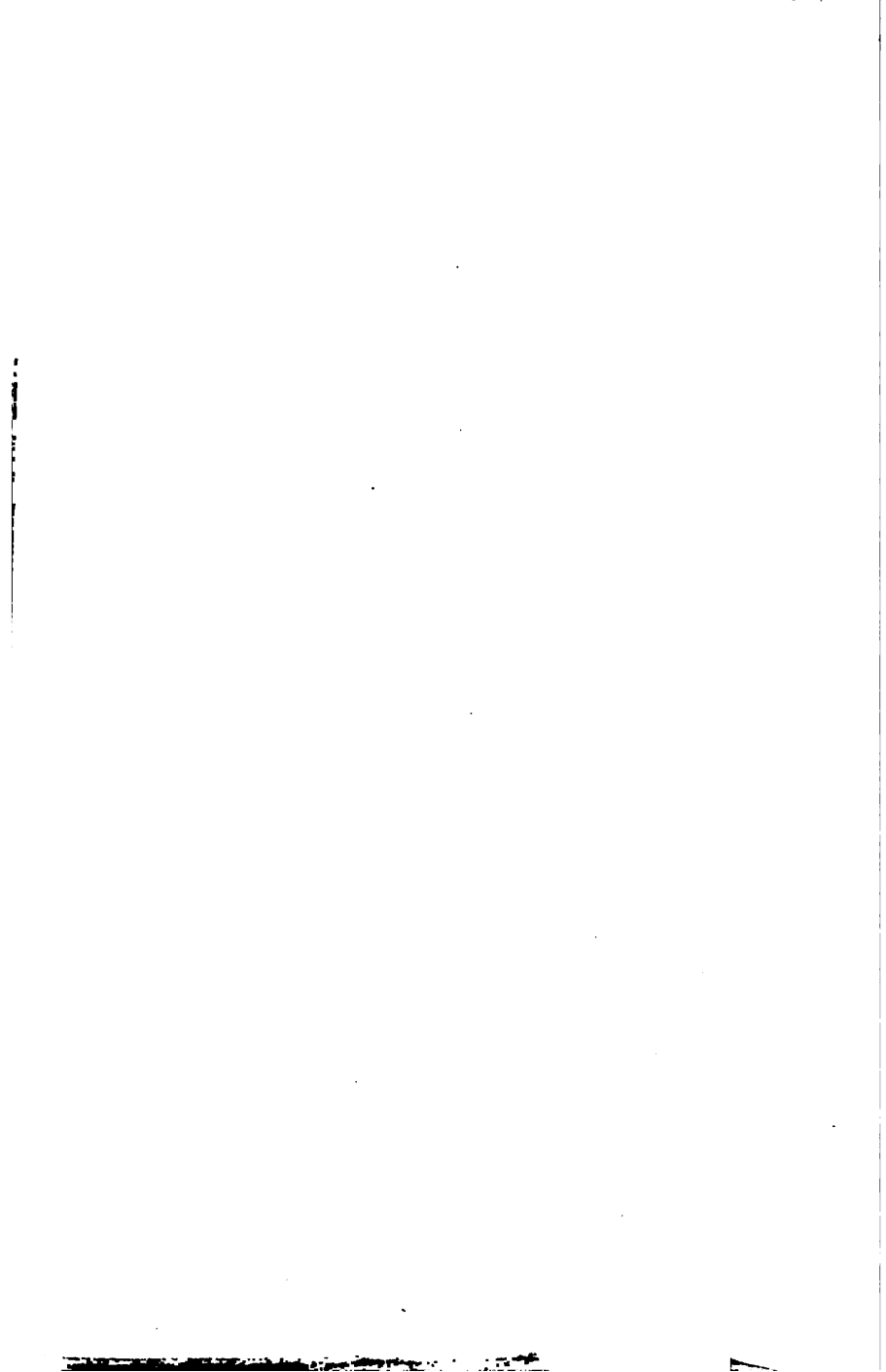
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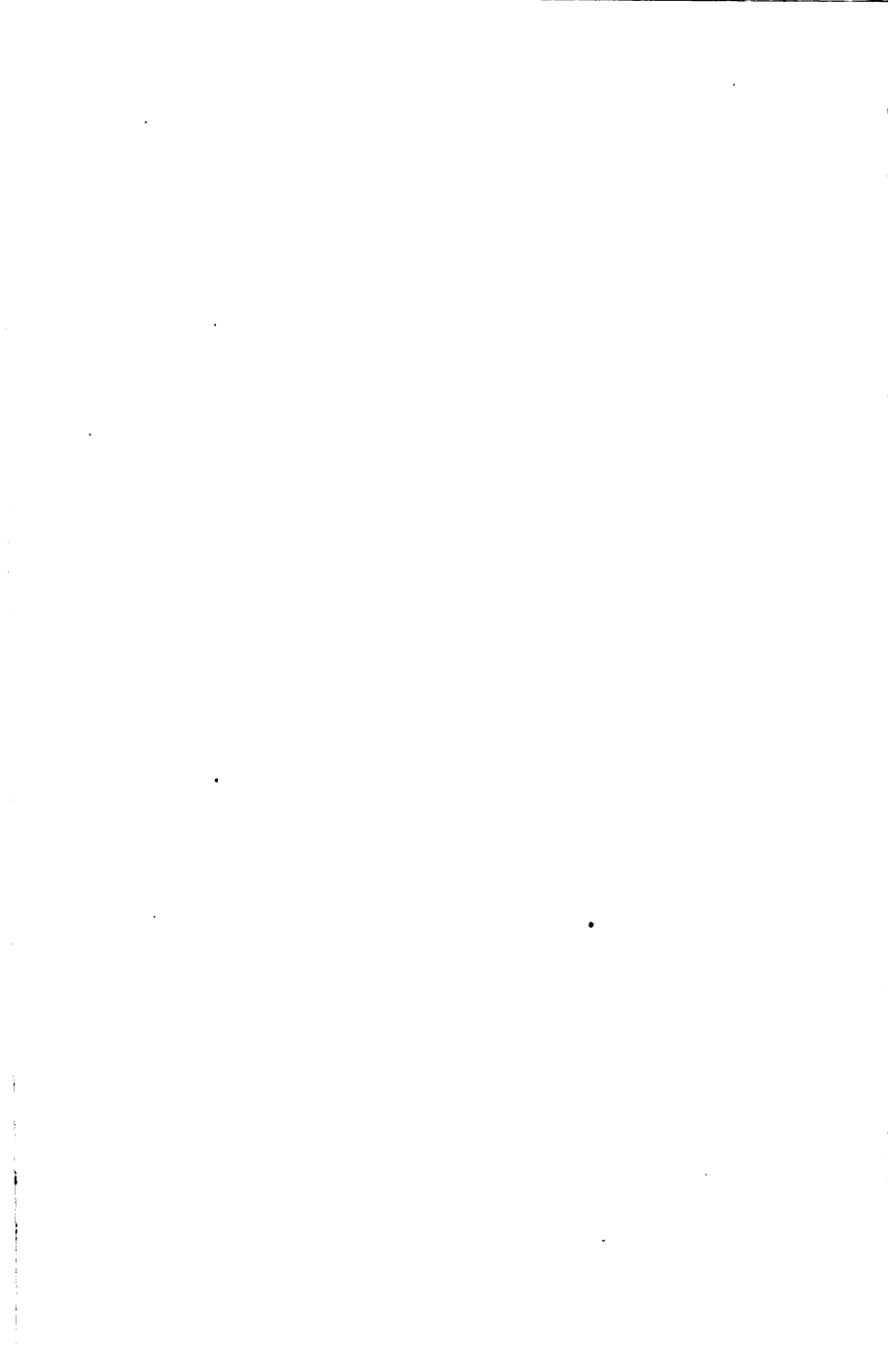
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ARTES SCIENTIA VERITAS

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## **YANKEE FANTASIES**



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# YANKEE FANTASIES

Five One-Act Plays

BY

PERCY MACKAYE



NEW YORK  
DUFFIELD & COMPANY  
1912

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**To**

**J. E. F.**

**THESE FANTASIES**

**ARE DEDICATED**

**IN FRIENDSHIP**



## CONTENTS

	PAGE
Preface .....	ix
CHUCK: An Orchard Fantasy .....	I
✓ GETTYSBURG: A Woodshed Commentary.....	35
✓ THE ANTICK: A Wayside Sketch.....	55
✓ THE CAT-BOAT: A Fantasy for Music.....	107
SAM AVERAGE: A Silhouette.....	137



## PREFACE

In country New England, where the writer has lived a large part of his winters and summers, human life is endowed with a poetry and drama distinctive, and not often realized by the casual observer, revealing its true nature only to those who love it with knowledge. From its half outwintered Puritanism—like arbutus from March-thaw banks—bloom strange human surprises: some lovely as flowers fragrant of their native haunts; others exotic, pagan, humorous, grotesque with contrasts, which fascinate and pique the dramatic artist to interpret them adequately.

For under all the outward dunness of Yankee life, there burns dimly a kind of smothered rebellion against its own chill constraint: a rebellion which blazes up in color, rather than fire, in a variety of human species, of which such a nature as Margaret Fuller's, in "Transcendental" days, is suggestively an example.

The native race, moreover, is dying, or being transmuted, and this touches the imagination of the dramatist to interpret it before its inevitable passing.

These little plays hardly unveil the borderland of the wistful poetry of that passing; but at least they may suggest, through fantasy, the quaintness and surprisingness of truth, in characters such as Chuck, Julie Bonheur, Jonas Boutwell, Link Tadbourne.



Thus the woodchuck traits of native character are familiar to the selectmen of every small Yankee community in their dealings with the poachings and vagrancies of the local church-and-town-scoffing rapscallion, who personally is often the most charming boon companion of the countryside.

The innate contempt of the Yankee for the "Canuck" (his French invader from Canada), increased by contrast of temperament and the steady encroachings of the Canuck industrially upon the more agricultural race; the survival, in modified form to-day, of Old England's "Anticks" and buffoon Masquers in the holiday appearances of the so-called "Antiques and Horribles": these are characteristic rather of Massachusetts communities than of other parts of New England.

In the interpretation, moreover, of all Yankee\* nature, the truth is not to be ignored that the race of New England has always been a race of readers, so that the tradition of books has become for them a vital part of real life, entering even into the thoughts and

\*In the interpretation of rural Yankee characters, the use of their distinctive dialect is, of course, needful. It is not really possible, however, to record any dialect artistically in the symbols of spelling. The implied shades of sound are subtle, and must be known to the reader beforehand to be justly reproduced by him in sound from the written page. The trained actor can, of course, render them rightly to the ears of his audience only if he be familiar with the spoken dialect. The spellings *thar* and *ye*, for example—dialect forms for *there* and *you*—are no adequate record of those words as spoken by a person who uses the dialect unconsciously. Such a person uses elisions and shadings of sound impossible to record, even by resorting to grotesque methods.

*Yer*, or *yuh*, for instance, is no clearer a symbol than *ye* for suggesting the sound of that word as spoken variously in dialect. Moreover, country New Englanders use the dialect in all stages of its gradual disintegration, from those who use still a pure "Bigelow" vocabulary and pronunciation, to those whose dictionary English is tinged by the mere dying twang of Yankeeedom.

To the eye, therefore, the written dialect forms must miss something of their spoken naturalness; but this is unavoidable.

motives of the illiterate. Thus the actual "life-study" suggestion for Jonas Boutwell, in "The Antick," was a dear old cow-driving, congregational minister, from whom I received—sonorously intoned—my earliest excerpts from the Elizabethan dramatists; and a carpenter found reading *The Odyssey*—as in "The Cat-Boat"—is not yet a prodigy among the children of Massachusetts schoolmasters.

In a recent volume on "The Repertory Theatre," Mr. P. P. Howe has convincingly shown how the present crying "need of the theatre is freedom to experiment," and how the promise of that freedom lies in "the Repertory Spirit."

Among the few distinguished achievements of repertory in English thus far, the productions of the Irish Players are eminent. Significantly, those productions have been, in large measure, one-act plays; and significantly one-act plays have elsewhere been practically absent from the regular English-speaking stage. Thus, but for the founding of the Abbey Theatre at Dublin, many charming and characteristic works of poets like Yeats and Synge might never have been written. On the other hand, among the "long run" dramatists, Mr. J. M. Barrie appears to be the one exceptional author of produced one-act plays.

Yet the one-act play is not only a form of expression fascinating in its manifold possibilities of dramatic suggestion; it is also a distinctive form, capable of expressing what the longer play can not. Like the short story, it is a special form of literature, but unlike the short story, the one-act play has not yet found its special publisher: that is, its theatrical producer.

With the exception of the Abbey Theatre, there is as yet no professional theatre which produces one-act plays in English as a creative, artistic policy.

In America, this lack is the more to be deplored because it is so unnecessary. That the needful creators of literature exist in America is demonstrated, for instance,—aside from our drama—by the high quality of work produced by a large number of short-story writers, and a lesser number of poets. That likewise there exists the public demand of all classes for a form of drama less sustained in action and time than the three-, four-, or five-act play, is demonstrated on the one hand by the nation-wide desire of amateurs in colleges, schools and elsewhere, to perform and witness one-act plays, and on the other hand, by the desire of millions to witness the one-act “sketches” of Vaudeville. That the needful money also exists is not to be disputed.

The one needful thing still lacking, then, is the intelligent initiative, of individuals or communities, to establish financially the practical means which shall enable those already existing creators of literature to serve that already existing demand for the one-act form of expression, in a way to deepen and refine that demand through enriching the power, charm and variety of the one-act form itself.

For one thing, creative experiment in that form is more practical than in longer forms. Ten one-act plays might be written by a dramatist in the time required for the same writer to create one long play. Ten one-act plays might often be performed for the expense of one long one. But still more important,

such creative experiment would make possible not simply the enrichment of the one-act form itself, but—by means of that—the enrichment of all ampler dramatic forms, which are fed and upbuilt by the subtle fusings and crystallizings of the lesser forms.

For this the needful and practical instrument would be what I may appropriately term a Studio Theatre—a theatre dedicated in policy wholly to experiment in dramatic art, being for the dramatist what his studio is for the painter, or his laboratory for the physicist.

Without such a specific working shop, fully equipped with the tools and interpreters of his art, and independent of immediate sales for his work, the scope and growth of the dramatist's art must remain limited by the conditions of speculative demand.

When, however, intelligent initiative shall have established such Studio Theatres, the American dramatist will be free to sketch and execute many quiet, quaint and lovely interpretations of our native environment now ignored. Particularly the aspects of rural life and character may then be etched lovingly with dramatic light and shade, and the dramatist may divine truthfully, and interpret freshly, from country-life numberless varieties and conflicts of human character, untrammelled by the need for Comic Supplement appeal, or "Old Homestead" conventions.

May lovers of the theatre soon see this need for its art, and supply it!

The present small volume seeks merely to suggest it.

In their themes, these five short plays treat of only a limited part of the potential native field—the Yankee, which takes its national importance from the

deep-seated historical influence of New England, and New England character, upon all our national life and growth.

Yankee interpretations, in the spirit of fantasy, have before now been conceived and welcomed in other forms of literature: the novel, the poem, the short story. Perhaps they may have their value, as pioneer experiment at least, in the form of drama.

Quite apart, however, from the limited field of these fantasies, unlimited aspects of our American life, rural and civic, local and national, are available to the dramatist who shall invoke for his work the Experimental Spirit, as otherwise they are not available.

It would be pleasant if these little plays might help to incite others in America to invoke that Spirit for the one-act form to larger and subtler results than their author has consummated. If so, they will have served, to that good purpose, the most important cause in the art of our theatre to-day—creative experiment.

PERCY MACKAYE.

CORNISH, NEW HAMPSHIRE,  
October, 1911.

**CHUCK**

**An Orchard Fantasy**

## CHARACTERS

---

DEACON DOLE.

ABEL, *his elder son.*

ELIJAH, *his younger son.*

LETTY, *a young girl.*

*The scene is laid in an old township of northern New England, at the present time: An Orchard Hillside, on an afternoon in late August.*

## CHUCK\*

*The foreground is shadowed by apple-tree boughs, beneath which a footpath winds between piles of ripe, sweet apples, climbs the slope toward the background, and disappears [left] behind bushes of alder and witch-hazel, the latter in golden bloom. Below these bushes, and partly screened by others in the left foreground, the edge of an eddying pool is visible, flecked with sunbeams and leaf-shadows and blotched with the luminous red of cardinal flowers.*

*The pool is evidently the shallow curve of a brook, for the splash of a waterfall tinkles behind the bushes, and occasional spray glistens through the greenery. Near the further bank of the pool is a low, flat boulder, behind which a less trodden path leads from the main footway into the hazel cover.*

*In the centre middleground rises a grassy knoll, the top of which is scarred yellow by the gravel of a woodchuck's burrow, partly excavated, it would seem, by a spade, which stands, thrust upright now, in the débris nearby. Fringing the knoll are low bushes of huckleberry, lamb-kill and sweetfern; behind it, the orchard slopes down steeply toward the right; beyond it, through the apple trees, are glimpses of rolling, summer hills.*

*When the scene opens, an oriole is singing somewhere in the leafy sunshine.*

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*On the ruined doorsill of his burrow, a woodchuck, squat on comfortable haunches, sits nibbling an ear of corn.*

*Deaf to the one and blind to the other, enters—left, along the footpath—DEACON DOLE: a spare, black figure in Sabbath-day garb. His shrewd, shaven face, home-cut, grey hair and stiff-kneed gait are those of a Yankee farmer about seventy. He walks slowly, clutching a black book in one hand, twice pausing to look back along the path.*

*From away on the left, a deep-toned bell resounds with regular cadence.*

*With the bell tones, intermittently from beyond the bushes, are mingled the shrilly notes of a tin flute, piped merrily.*

*On a sudden, conscious of the flute, the Deacon stops and listens; stoops and peers among the bushes; then gazes reflectively at the woodchuck's hole, whose occupant, at his approach, has retired within, all but his furry noddle. As the old man turns aside curiously to examine this, a low, giggling laughter is distinctly audible. The Deacon's face darkens. Again the flute notes trill, in the intervals of the bell.*

### THE DEACON

*[Stands stiffly erect, and calls in a loud, harsh voice.]*  
Chuck!—Chuck!

### A VOICE

*[Deep like the Deacon's, but faint, as if far away.]*  
Chuck!—Chuck!

*[With troubled look, Deacon Dole turns again to the footpath and is resuming his measured walk, when the sharp report of a gun causes him to exclaim and start back. The wood-chuck's head vanishes.]*

## THE DEACON

*[Screwing his face.]*

Damn him!

*[Then hugging tighter his book, he mutters.]*

Lord, on Thy day—into temptation!

## A VOICE

*[From behind the bushes, musical and vibrant with laughter.]*

Chucky! Chucky! Whoa, thar!

*[Through the hazels behind the boulder, ABEL enters and bounds, with a hop, skip and jump, to the top of the knoll. There he stands reloading his gun, and clucking his cheek like a chipmunk.]*

So, old Bunker! Scot into your breastworks, did ye? Godfrey, you 've got book larnin' for field service!

*[Abel is a young fellow, about twenty: a half-wild figure, clothed in tattered yellow undershirt and blue overalls, frayed half to the knees—his bare arms and legs sun-browned and splotched with wood-stains.*

*His expression just now is sly and twinkling, as his small squirrel eyes squint through his tousled tow hair. On his head are laid great green lily-pads, tied by long, rubbery stems under his chin. From his belt hang the pelts of small animals, greyish brown. From one hip-pocket sticks a tin flute, from the other a cartridge box.]*

## THE DEACON

*[Glowering.]*

Mornin', Chuck!

*[Abel drops his gun and starts up, scared by the voice.]*

Dressed for meetin', I see, and keepin' the Sabbath's usual.

*[Pointing to the lily-pads on Abel's head.]*

What ye call it—bonnet, or hat?

ABEL

*[With the gleam of a grin.]*

Them 's cure for sunstroke!

## THE DEACON

Oh!—What have ye—hired out to a new trade, sence ye broke jail?

ABEL

*[His look growing subtle and sullen.]*

What trade?

## THE DEACON

*[With the ghost of a thin smile.]*

Murder.

ABEL

What ye goin' to run me in for now?

## THE DEACON

Killin' your kin, be ye?

ABEL

*[Amazed, then amused.]*

Now, thar! So ye thought I took that shot—

## THE DEACON

Oh, not at me. I ain't no kin o' yourn now, no: you ain't none o' mine.

*[Points to the burrow.]*

I was makin' reference to them thievin' field-rat folks o' yourn, the lusty varmin that farrowed ye, and swapped ye off, in my first-born's cradle, for a son o' mine; them thar, that namesaked ye, your huckleberry brethren—the woodchucks.

*[Smiling, acidly.]*

Thou shalt not commit Murder, saith the commandment!

ABEL

*[Who has listened with growing good humor, shows the skins at his belt and laughs.]*

If ye mean old Bunker in thar—look a-here! I 've skun the hull family, 'ceptin' the old man.

THE DEACON

*[Keenly.]*

So ye have; so ye have.

ABEL

I tried to dig him out with the spade; but while I was bangin' down his front door, he put on his sneakers and slipped out the back ell.

*[Laughs reminiscently.]*

I tell ye: he ain't forgot his calc'latin' tables—the old un!

THE DEACON

*[Ruminating, with relish.]*

So he ain't; so he ain't!

ABEL

I pretty nigh cotched him last week, though. I hadn't no gun, so he jest sat thar and winked. Then

I fetched a grab—but Jehu! he can bite, when ye try to pull his leg.

THE DEACON

So he can! And speakin' o' calc'latin', now many times, do you calc'late, I 've told you to clear out?

*[Abel grins.]*

Eh? Answer me: how many?

ABEL

*[Taking out his flute.]*

So I answered him, as I thought good:

"As many red herrin's as grow in the wood."

*[He plays a snatch on the flute, hopping to his tune.]*

THE DEACON

*[Shaking his book at him.]*

Quit it! Quit, I tell ye!

*[Abel puts up his flute, but continues to twiddle dumbly on his left middle finger thrust in his mouth.]*

I 'm a square man. I wa'n't chose to be deacon for nothin'. I 'm fair and square at catechisin', and I'm givin' you one more chanct to answer me back fair and square.

ABEL

*[Saluting.]*

Fair and square, Sir.

THE DEACON

Answer me: How much chores have ye arned your victuals with, Chuck—well, say, in the last six months?

ABEL

*[Grinning, sits on the burrow and lolls.]*

How much wood would a woodchuck chuck,  
If a woodchuck would chuck wood?

## THE DEACON

*[Shaken with anger.]*

Damn ye! Clear out, or I' ll have ye haled back to jail. Git offn the place!

*[He moves toward Abel.]*

## ABEL

*[Springing up, turns sullen again.]*

Guess it 's my place, too!

## THE DEACON

Ye guess so!

## ABEL

And my folks too.

## THE DEACON

Yourn? Ha!

## ABEL

One o' ye anyhow.

## THE DEACON

Which?

## ABEL

The gal—Litty.

## THE DEACON

Stop: ye *dares'nt* name her! The gal ye 've brought to shame in your father's house; her as I 'dopted when her own folks died, and raised her to be the woman in my own house, with my own sons—good Lord!—and to share in the victuals and the chores—

## ABEL

*[Lilting.]*

And the chores, good Lord, and the chores!

## THE DEACON

Yes, the chores: She never shirked 'em till you brought her to shame, and made her grow slack, a-hankerin' for you and the vanities and lusts of the varmin you 'sort with.—And the likes of you my flesh and blood—a Dole!

## ABEL

Dole! Dole! Dole!

Says the De'il to the dead man's soul!

## THE DEACON

And look at your brother 'Lijah—town clerk a'ready, and redeemed in the Lord's grace: and him a year younger.

## ABEL

Pity I wa'n't born o' legal age, like 'Lijah!

## THE DEACON

True 'nough: you make me a pretty son and heir, don't ye?

## ABEL

Sun and air 's pretty much all you've give' me to grow on.

## THE DEACON

Yes, thank God for 'Lijah! But you—you 've lied and you 've drunk; you 've lazed and you 've lusted and you 've stole: you 've stole from your own home-folks, and you 've ravished in the house of your father. But 'Lijah, your brother, he 's redeemed ye. He 's put ye in jail.

## ABEL

[Grinning.]

Has he *kep'* me thar?

## THE DEACON

And he 's takin' poor Letty to meetin', to marry her himself, lawful—this day and mornin'.

## ABEL

*[Taking out his flute.]*

If they *git* thar!—If they *git* thar!

*[He trills a repetition of the lilt.]*

## THE DEACON

*[Seizing up the gun from the ground.]*

What ye mean by that, ye whistlin' do-no-good?

## ABEL

If, says I; if!—What's the dif?

## THE DEACON

*[Examining the cartridge in the gun, trembles with rage.]*

So! You was layin' for your own brother with this gun, was ye? Now, then, I'm done with ye, for al'ays and all. Git out, you lustin' rat, you rollin' stone o' Satan, ye! You filanderin', murderin' pest, git outn here! Git outn my life, git outn my home and my fields. I 'll fodder the likes of ye no more.

*[He raises and aims the gun at Abel, who dodges involuntarily.]*

Git off!

*[Staring at the gun's nozzle, Abel backs slowly away, rounding toward the bushes.]*

And I warn ye, Chuck, the last time: Keep in hidin'—

*[Points to the woodchuck's hole.]*

—like him. For if ever I set eyes on ye agin, trespassin' on my acres, I 'll shoot ye, for the ground-hog



that ye be, and bury ye thar in your own burrer. Git!

*[Reaching the boulder, Abel pauses, looking down at it, and smiling a quiet, absent-minded smile, seems to forget the gun and the glowering deacon. Loosing from his head the water-lily pads, he drops them in the ferns by the rock.]*

*Above him, a locust rasps its drowsy midsummer whirr. Listening, he stoops, pulls a broad grass-blade, splits it leisurely, lays it between his two thumbs, and blows on it—through his lips—a buzzing, locust-like noise.*

*The Deacon, setting his jaw, lets the gun-barrel sink slowly to the ground.*

*Buzzing his grass-blade, Abel idles along the hazel path, and disappears.*

*The church bell, which has rung at regular intervals, now ceases to sound.]*

#### THE DEACON

*[Climbing the footpath—gun and book in hand—mutters, as he goes from sight.]*

Son and heir! Son and heir!

*[From the left now are heard the reverberating tones of a church organ, and soon after—the voices of a small congregation, singing. In the still summer air, the words of their hymn are half distinguishable.]*

#### THE VOICES

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise Him, all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;

Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost!

Amen!

*[While the voices are singing, Abel reappears from the bushes and, lying on his back upon the shady slope, plays an answering improvisation on his flute. As he does so, he keeps his eyes fixed on the burrow, out of which ere long the head of the woodchuck emerges. Catching sight of it,*

*Abel turns over on his stomach, and—still fluting with the fingers of one hand—elbows himself, with hitches, through the huckleberry shrubs, nearer and nearer to the burrow. Reaching it, he raises his head suddenly, and grabs with one hand. The woodchuck dodges in and disappears. Abel scrambles headlong after him into the burrow—his heels kicking the air.]*

## ABEL

*[Coaxingly.]*

Chuck! Chuck!

*[From the right, Voices are heard talking.]*

*Abel wriggles outward, replaces his heels by his head, rubs the fresh earth from his eyes and hair, and peers blinking above the embankment, where only his brown head is visible.]*

## A WOMAN'S VOICE

*[As in pain.]*

I can't, 'Lijah: I just can't go on 't.

## A MAN'S VOICE

'T ain't only a few rods to the meetin' house.

*[Enter, right, Letty and Elijah. The former is a slight girl, in her teens, calm-browed, with large, soft eyes. She is still in the faint bloom of an early beauty fragile as an hyatica. Signs of drudgery and scant fare, however, are beginning to show in the just perceptible stoop of her figure and the shape of her hardened hands. She is dressed with plain simplicity, except for the white folds of a bride's veil, pinned to her hair.]*

*Elijah, clean-cut of feature, resembles somewhat his father, but lacks the Deacon's dignity of years and power. He wears a styleless black suit, and speaks with a querulous sharpness, tempered at times by a conscious effort to seem kinder than he feels.*

*Letty, limping, reaches one hand toward Elijah for support, but he either does not notice, or ignores, the gesture.]*

## CHUCK

LETTY

*[Pausing, speaks faintly.]*

I 'm so sorry: I can't stand no longer.

*[Swaying, she sinks upon the ground.]*

ELIJAH

*[Uneasily, looking away, left.]*

We 're late. Father 's gone ahead long ago. *He*  
got acrost safe. Where 's it hurt ye?

LETTY

*[Painfully.]*

My ankle. When I fell in the brook, it got twisted,  
I guess.

ELIJAH

I 'd like to catch the mean-livin' rascal that sawed  
the footbridge. I 'll run him in for 't.

LETTY

I 'm glad 't was me, anyhow; and you was behind. ✓

ELIJAH

Yes, I was just 'bout to set my foot on 't, when 't  
went down with ye. Lucky you didn't wet your shoes.

LETTY

'T was 'most dried up—the brook.

ELIJAH

Wonder who did it!

*[With sudden suspiciousness.]*Letty!—Was it *him*?

LETTY

*[Timidly.]*

Who?

ELIJAH

Oh, you know, I guess: you 'd oughter. Well, if it 's him, I 'll jail him for that over again.

LETTY

*[Appealingly.]*

Please, but—

ELIJAH

*[With deliberate politeness.]*

Come, Letitia: I 'll help ye 'long the path.

LETTY

I can't.

ELIJAH

*Can't?* What will ye—set *here* and get married?

*[Smiling an anemic smile, he extends one hand for her to rise.]*

Guess you ain't calc'latin' on a weddin' by a wood-chuck's hole!

LETTY

*[Trying hard to smile.]*

No; I don't scarcely know what—

ELIJAH

Come: the minister's spoke and paid for. It's fixed we 're to jine him in the vestry, after meetin' 's out.

LETTY

It 's such a pity—

ELIJAH

*[Stiffening.]*

*How?*

LETTY

I mean—me bein' laid up.

ELIJAH

Well, you don't reckon I 'm to carry ye, do ye?—Smart looks we 'd make at meetin'—me heftin' ye like a bale o' hay! No, thank ye: I 'd never hear the last on 't. Come; git up; do!

LETTY

*[In an agony of embarrassment, tries to stand, but sinks down again.]*

'Tain't no use, 'Lijah; I 'm 'bliged to ask ye to go back to the four corners and ask old Miss Dikewell to lend me her crutches: she 'll help me out—just to get to meetin' and back.

ELIJAH

Crutches, ah?

*[Taking out his watch.]*

Quarter past 'leven. You al'ays did make mountains outn molehills.

LETTY

I 'm so sorry.

ELIJAH

*[Morosely.]*

Married on crutches! and next mornin'—the doctor, I presume!

LETTY

No, 'Lijah—

ELIJAH

No, I guess too! A bad start, I call it. Well, seein' ye can't come respectable, I s'pose I 've got to get ye the crutches: but mind—no doctor!

*[He goes off along the path, right.]*

*Letty crouches over her foot in pain.*

*From the woodchuck's burrow, Abel whistles low.*

*Letty sits back, pale, and listens.*

*Still hidden, Abel sings a snatch:]*

ABEL

Come 'cross lots, come 'cross lots,

Says I to Molly, to Molly my gal!

LETTY

*[Starting half to her feet.]*

Abel!

ABEL

*[In a loud whisper.]*

Litty!

LETTY

*[Staring about.]*

O Chuck, where be you?

*[Wriggling from the burrow, Abel scrambles down the slope,  
—ardent, and covered with brown earth—and embraces  
her suddenly.]*

ABEL

It 's me!

*[He kisses her.]*

LETTY

*[Struggling feebly.]*

No, no!

*[She sinks back helpless, and moans.]*

ABEL

Gal, what 's hurtin'? Which foot is it?

LETTY

*[Faintly.]*

Go 'way, quick.

ABEL

[Feeling her ankle.]

Why, it 's all swole up.

[Whipping out a jackknife from his pocket, he cuts the shoelaces, deftly slips off the shoe, flings it away, and draws off the stocking, while Letty murmurs faintly: "Don't, please."]

It 's cold water 't wants. Wait a bit.

[Taking the stocking, he dips it in the pool, hurries back with it dripping, and wraps it carefully round the ankle.]

Smart, does it?

[He looks anxiously in her face. She nods.

Looking quickly round, he sees a tin-can cover, fills it from the brook, brings and holds it to her mouth.]

Swig—jest a mite!

[She drinks.]

That 's nice. Onct more. Sun 's hot.

[She drinks again.]

LETTY

[Reviving.]

Thanks.

ABEL

Durn thanks. You won't never forgive me.

LETTY

What for?

ABEL

'T was me: I sawed it.

LETTY

Sawed what?

ABEL

The foot-bridge. I never reckoned on it bustin' through with you. I calc'lated on *them*.

LETTY

Them?

ABEL

The old man, and 'Lijah. With a good ten-foot tumble, I calc'lated on a wooden leg apiece.

LETTY

[*Painfully.*]

O, Chuck!

ABEL

Born fool, me! Might a-knowed Old Nick would leave *them* in luck, and *you* in the lurch.

[*At her expression, he grows tenderly anxious.*]

Doos it hurt hard, Litty, my gal?

LETTY

I ain't yourn no more, Abel.

ABEL

[*Quickly.*]

Why not?

LETTY

[*Touching her veil.*]

Ain't you noticed—this?

ABEL

[*Starts up, flushing.*]

Yare: I noticed it.

[*He pulls it suddenly from her head.*]

*With the action, her bright hair falls about her shoulders, and she reaches toward him, with a startled cry.*

LETTY

Chuck! Chuck! Chuck! What ye doin'?



ABEL

*[Rolling the veil into a ball, with both hands.]*

Now ye see it—

*[He springs to the woodchuck's hole and stuffs the veil in.]*

—and now ye don't!

*[He stands staring at her, as she starts to her knees, with  
outreached arms.]*

Goda'mighty! You 're some pretty!

LETTY

What 'll I do? 'Lijah 's comin' back.

ABEL

*[Coming to her.]*

What of it! You 're my gal, ain't ye?

LETTY

You 've broke jail: he 'll put ye back again.

ABEL

*[Scornfully.]**Him* put me back—I guess! Watch him tryin'!

LETTY

He 'll tell your father at meetin'. Go 'way, quick.

ABEL

*[Striding down the path.]*

The meetin' 's goin' to be right here.

LETTY

Come back! The Deacon said he 'd shoot ye, if he  
catched ye again on the place.

ABEL

That 's the Deacon's long suit—talk!

LETTY

And what 'll I do without my shoe and my veil!

*[She starts to limp toward the woodchuck's hole.]*

ABEL

*[Hurrying to her.]*

Stop your goin' on that ankle, Litty.

LETTY

*[In despair.]*

I can see him now. He 's runnin'. Oh, hide! Hide, quick!

ABEL

If I hide us both, will you be my gal, and not hisn?

LETTY

*[Throwing her arms about his shoulders, as he lifts her.]*

O, dear! O Chuck! Hide, quick!

ABEL

*[With a proud smile, bearing her toward the brook.]*

My, your hair! It smells like hazel flowers.

*[Lightly he springs with her into the bed of the brook, and disappears behind the bushes.]*

*They have hardly disappeared, when Elijah comes hurrying up the path, tucking the ends of a handkerchief into his sweating collar. He carries a pair of crutches. Pausing, dumbfounded, he searches about with his eyes.]*

ELIJAH

*[Calling.]*

Letty! Letitia! Where be ye? Letty!

*[Suddenly he darts forward and picks up Letty's shoe from the grass. He examines it carefully, pulling out some of the cut laces. Then his eyes narrow, his face hardens, and he flings the crutches on the ground, with an ugly*

that ye be, and bury ye thar in your own burrer. Git!

*[Reaching the boulder, Abel pauses, looking down at it, and smiling a quiet, absent-minded smile, seems to forget the gun and the glowering deacon. Loosing from his head the water-lily pads, he drops them in the ferns by the rock.]*

*Above him, a locust rasps its drowsy midsummer whirr. Listening, he stoops, pulls a broad grass-blade, splits it leisurely, lays it between his two thumbs, and blows on it—through his lips—a buzzing, locust-like noise.*

*The Deacon, setting his jaw, lets the gun-barrel sink slowly to the ground.*

*Buzzing his grass-blade, Abel idles along the hazel path, and disappears.*

*The church bell, which has rung at regular intervals, now ceases to sound.]*

#### THE DEACON

*[Climbing the footpath—gun and book in hand—mutters, as he goes from sight.]*

Son and heir! Son and heir!

*[From the left now are heard the reverberating tones of a church organ, and soon after—the voices of a small congregation, singing. In the still summer air, the words of their hymn are half distinguishable.]*

#### THE VOICES

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise Him, all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;

Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost!

Amen!

*[While the voices are singing, Abel reappears from the bushes and, lying on his back upon the shady slope, plays an answering improvisation on his flute. As he does so, he keeps his eyes fixed on the burrow, out of which ere long the head of the woodchuck emerges. Catching sight of it,*

*Abel turns over on his stomach, and—still fluting with the fingers of one hand—elbows himself, with hitches, through the huckleberry shrubs, nearer and nearer to the burrow. Reaching it, he raises his head suddenly, and grabs with one hand. The woodchuck dodges in and disappears. Abel scrambles headlong after him into the burrow—his heels kicking the air.]*

## ABEL

*[Coaxingly.]*

Chuck! Chuck!

*[From the right, Voices are heard talking.]*

*Abel wriggles outward, replaces his heels by his head, rubs the fresh earth from his eyes and hair, and peers blinking above the embankment, where only his brown head is visible.]*

## A WOMAN'S VOICE

*[As in pain.]*

I can't, 'Lijah: I just can't go on 't.

## A MAN'S VOICE

'T ain't only a few rods to the meetin' house.

*[Enter, right, Letty and Elijah. The former is a slight girl, in her teens, calm-browed, with large, soft eyes. She is still in the faint bloom of an early beauty fragile as an hyatica. Signs of drudgery and scant fare, however, are beginning to show in the just perceptible stoop of her figure and the shape of her hardened hands. She is dressed with plain simplicity, except for the white folds of a bride's veil, pinned to her hair.]*

*Elijah, clean-cut of feature, resembles somewhat his father, but lacks the Deacon's dignity of years and power. He wears a styleless black suit, and speaks with a querulous sharpness, tempered at times by a conscious effort to seem kinder than he feels.]*

*Letty, limping, reaches one hand toward Elijah for support, but he either does not notice, or ignores, the gesture.]*

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*Letty, limping, reaches one hand toward Elijah for support, but he either does not notice, or ignores, the gesture.]*

LETTY

*[Pausing, speaks faintly.]*

I 'm so sorry : I can't stand no longer.

*[Swaying, she sinks upon the ground.]*

ELIJAH

*[Uneasily, looking away, left.]*

We 're late. Father 's gone ahead long ago. *He*  
got acrost safe. Where 's it hurt ye?

LETTY

*[Painfully.]*

My ankle. When I fell in the brook, it got twisted,  
I guess.

ELIJAH

I 'd like to catch the mean-livin' rascal that sawed  
the footbridge. I 'll run him in for 't.

LETTY

I 'm glad 't was me, anyhow ; and you was behind. ✓

ELIJAH

Yes, I was just 'bout to set my foot on 't, when 't  
went down with ye. Lucky you didn't wet your shoes.

LETTY

'T was 'most dried up—the brook.

ELIJAH

Wonder who did it!

*[With sudden suspiciousness.]*Letty!—Was it *him*?

LETTY

*[Timidly.]*

Who?

ELIJAH

Oh, you know, I guess: you 'd oughter. Well, if it 's him, I 'll jail him for that over again.

LETTY

*[Appealingly.]*

Please, but—

ELIJAH

*[With deliberate politeness.]*

Come, Letitia: I 'll help ye 'long the path.

LETTY

I can't.

ELIJAH

*Can't?* What will ye—set *here* and get married?

*[Smiling an anemic smile, he extends one hand for her to rise.]*

Guess you ain't calc'latin' on a weddin' by a wood-chuck's hole!

LETTY

*[Trying hard to smile.]*

No; I don't scarcely know what—

ELIJAH

Come: the minister's spoke and paid for. It's fixed we 're to jine him in the vestry, after meetin' 's out.

LETTY

It 's such a pity—

ELIJAH

*[Stiffening.]*

*How?*

LETTY

I mean—me bein' laid up.



ELIJAH

Well, you don't reckon I 'm to carry ye, do ye?—Smart looks we 'd make at meetin'—me heftin' ye like a bale o' hay! No, thank ye: I 'd never hear the last on 't. Come; git up; do!

LETTY

*[In an agony of embarrassment, tries to stand, but sinks down again.]*

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Crutches, ah?

*[Taking out his watch.]*

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I 'm so sorry.

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*[Morosely.]*

Married on crutches! and next mornin'—the doctor, I presume!

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No, I guess too! A bad start, I call it. Well, seein' ye can't come respectable, I s'pose I 've got to get ye the crutches: but mind—no doctor!

*[He goes off along the path, right.]*

*Letty crouches over her foot in pain.*

*From the woodchuck's burrow, Abel whistles low.  
Letty sits back, pale, and listens.  
Still hidden, Abel sings a snatch:]*

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Come 'cross lots, come 'cross lots,  
Says I to Molly, to Molly my gal!

LETTY

*[Starting half to her feet.]*

Abel!

ABEL

*[In a loud whisper.]*

Litty!

LETTY

*[Staring about.]*

O Chuck, where be you?

*[Wriggling from the burrow, Abel scrambles down the slope,  
—ardent, and covered with brown earth—and embraces  
her suddenly.]*

ABEL

It 's me!

*[He kisses her.]*

LETTY

*[Struggling feebly.]*

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*[She sinks back helpless, and moans.]*

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Gal, what 's hurtin'? Which foot is it?

LETTY

*[Faintly.]*

Go 'way, quick.

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*[Feeling her ankle.]*

Why, it 's all swole up.

*[Whipping out a jackknife from his pocket, he cuts the shoelaces, deftly slips off the shoe, flings it away, and draws off the stocking, while Letty murmurs faintly: "Don't, please."]*

It 's cold water 't wants. Wait a bit.

*[Taking the stocking, he dips it in the pool, hurries back with it dripping, and wraps it carefully round the ankle.]*

Smart, does it?

*[He looks anxiously in her face. She nods.**Looking quickly round, he sees a tin-can cover, fills it from the brook, brings and holds it to her mouth.]*

Swig—jest a mite!

*[She drinks.]*

That 's nice. Onct more. Sun 's hot.

*[She drinks again.]*

LETTY

*[Reviving.]*

Thanks.

ABEL

Durn thanks. You won't never forgive me.

LETTY

What for?

ABEL

'T was me: I sawed it.

LETTY

Sawed what?

ABEL

The foot-bridge. I never reckoned on it bustin' through with you. I calc'lated on *them*.

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tumble, I calc'lated on a wooden leg apiece.

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*[Painfully.]*

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leave *them* in luck, and *you* in the lurch.

*[At her expression, he grows tenderly anxious.]*

Doos it hurt hard, Litty, my gal?

LETTY

I ain't yourn no more, Abel.

ABEL

*[Quickly.]*

Why not?

LETTY

*[Touching her veil.]*

Ain't you noticed—this?

ABEL

*[Starts up, flushing.]*

Yare: I noticed it.

*[He pulls it suddenly from her head.**With the action, her bright hair falls about her shoulders, and  
she reaches toward him, with a startled cry.]*

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Chuck! Chuck! Chuck! What ye doin'?

ABEL

*[Rolling the veil into a ball, with both hands.]*

Now ye see it—

*[He springs to the woodchuck's hole and stuffs the veil in.]*

—and now ye don't!

*[He stands staring at her, as she starts to her knees, with outreached arms.]*

Goda'mighty! You 're some pretty!

LETTY

What 'll I do? 'Lijah 's comin' back.

ABEL

*[Coming to her.]*

What of it! You 're my gal, ain't ye?

LETTY

You 've broke jail: he 'll put ye back again.

ABEL

*[Scornfully.]**Him* put me back—I guess! Watch him tryin'!

LETTY

He 'll tell your father at meetin'. Go 'way, quick.

ABEL

*[Striding down the path.]*

The meetin' 's goin' to be right here.

LETTY

Come back! The Deacon said he 'd shoot ye, if he caught ye again on the place.

ABEL

That 's the Deacon's long suit—talk!

LETTY

And what 'll I do without my shoe and my veil!

*[She starts to limp toward the woodchuck's hole.]*

ABEL

*[Hurrying to her.]*

Stop your goin' on that ankle, Litty.

LETTY

*[In despair.]*

I can see him now. He 's runnin'. Oh, hide! Hide, quick!

ABEL

If I hide us both, will you be my gal, and not hisn?

LETTY

*[Throwing her arms about his shoulders, as he lifts her.]*

O, dear! O Chuck! Hide, quick!

ABEL

*[With a proud smile, bearing her toward the brook.]*

My, your hair! It smells like hazel flowers.

*[Lightly he springs with her into the bed of the brook, and disappears behind the bushes.]*

*They have hardly disappeared, when Elijah comes hurrying up the path, tucking the ends of a handkerchief into his sweating collar. He carries a pair of crutches. Pausing, dumbfounded, he searches about with his eyes.]*

ELIJAH

*[Calling.]*

Letty! Letitia! Where be ye? Letty!

*[Suddenly he darts forward and picks up Letty's shoe from the grass. He examines it carefully, pulling out some of the cut laces. Then his eyes narrow, his face hardens, and he flings the crutches on the ground, with an ugly*

*muttering. Pocketing the shoe, he hurries off toward the church. For an instant, Abel's head appears through the bushes, looking after him.*

*Then the faint thunder of the organ rolls once more through the orchard, and the sound of the congregation, singing:]*

#### THE CHURCH VOICES

All hail the power of Jesus' name,  
 Let angels prostrate fall;  
 Bring forth the royal diadem,  
 And crown him Lord of all;  
 And—crown—him  
 Lor—or—ord of all!

*[Through these more distant voices, the voice of Abel, close by, sings from behind the bushes, mingling with the organ tones.]*

#### THE VOICE OF ABEL

Come 'cross lots, come 'cross lots,  
 Says I to Molly, to Molly my gal!  
 Joe Pie weed is tall and yellor,  
 Cider-pears hang low and meller,  
 Stoop down, and scoot t' meet your feller  
 Where th' ain't no tattletal'.

O Joe Pie, Joe Pie,  
 If gallin' and gospel don't 'gree,  
 We 'll give the good folks the go-by—  
 Molly my gal, and me!

#### THE CHURCH VOICES

And—crown—him  
 Lor—or—ord of all!

*[The organ still rolls.*

*Behind the bushes, the tin flute trills a few notes. Then*

*Abel reënters, through the hazels, carrying Letty, in whose loosened hair he has stuck white water-lilies and cardinal flowers. In her hand she holds a bunch of half-opened lily buds. Abel sits on the low boulder—placing Letty, a clinging wisp of a girl, beside him. Both her feet are now bare.]*

ABEL

*[Starting to sing again.]*

Come 'cross lots—

LETTY

*[Putting her hand over his mouth.]*

Shh!

ABEL

He 's clean out o' hearin'.

*[Wetting his forefinger in his mouth, he holds it in the air.]*

The wind 's from the meetin' house.—Mind where you 're settin'?

LETTY

*[With a happy cry.]*

Why, the boulder—it 's ourn!

ABEL

Rec'lect, do ye?

LETTY

The first time I come 'cross lots, and you met me here: O, Chuck!

ABEL

The moon come out; and afterwards we waded for lilies.

LETTY

Lily-time—a year ago!



ABEL

And you made head-gear on 'em: the pads for me, and the blooms for yourself. Do it agin, gal, wont ye?

*[Picking up the pads, which he dropped by the boulder.]*

Look, here 's mine, made a'ready. You 've got the star-buds thar. Make yourself a genuine bride-veil, will ye?

LETTY

If you want me.

ABEL

Do I?

*[He caresses her. She begins to weave the water lilies together.]*

How 's the off hoof now, little heifer? No more hurt feelin'?

LETTY

Seems I ain't no feelin' nowheres, 'ceptin' here.

*[She feels of her throat, and swallows.]*

ABEL

And here?

*[He kisses her on the mouth. She clings to him impetuously.]*

LETTY

O Chuck! When he don't find me at meetin', he 'll fetch your father.

ABEL

Not s' long 's the praisin' lasts. Hark: they 're off agin.

*[He halloos, to the organ tones:]*

Come 'cross lots, come 'cross lots,

Says I to Molly, and let down the bars!

*[The Voices of the congregation resume their singing, while*

*Abel—swaying Letty on his knee—carols his counter-song.]*

## THE CHURCH VOICES

Oh, would like yonder sacred throng  
We at His feet might fall,  
And join the everlasting song,  
And crown Him Lord of all!

## ABEL

Bull and heifer drink in the meader,  
Boy and gal are tired o' the treader;  
Skin out—when the sky is growin' redder—  
And steal your fun from the stars.

O Joe Pie, Joe Pie,  
If pairin' and preachin' don't gee,  
We 'll give the good Lord the go-by—  
Molly my gal, and me!

## THE CHURCH VOICES

—Lor—or—ord of all! —A-men!

*[The organ ceases. There is silence, except for the burring of a locust.]*

## LETTY

*[In an awed whisper.]*

They 've stopped. He'll be tellin' your father.

## ABEL

Not yit; the preachin' 's goin' on. We 've got the  
hull sarmon to lie snug in—snug 's a bug in a rug.

## LETTY

You guess we 're safe and sure here?

ABEL

Safe as salvation, and sure as sinnin'.

*[He fondles her hair, looking happily in her eyes. She returns his gaze, yearningly.]*

LETTY

Boy—and you love me—after all?

ABEL

Guess agin.

*[He kisses her.]*

LETTY

I thought 't was all over. That 's why I took 'Lijah. They couldn't a-made me done it nohow, if it hadn't a-been—hadn't a-been—for Nan.

ABEL

Now don't you fuss 'bout Nan. Nan 's no sort. She 's jest a cider gal.

LETTY

What 's a cider gal?

ABEL

Oh, when Jack takes his drop, he wants his Jill. But that ain't lovin'.

LETTY

I don't make out.

ABEL

No; you wa'n't never drunk: that 's why. I was drunk: that 's all.

LETTY

*[Gently.]*

Wa'n't that 'nough?

ABEL

'Nough for the preachers, I reckon. Ye ain't jined them yit, have ye?

LETTY

No, Chuck, no. But 'Lijah said how you loved her, and your father said how—seein' he 'd 'dopted me—my child would have to be born reg'lar into the church and the family, and bear the name o' Dole; and so 'Lijah wanted me for himself; and they was both afeard—

ABEL

You better bet they was! They was both afeard they wouldn't have nobody to do the chores for nothin': no gal to cook and scrub and clean and do the milkin'. Skeered o' the chores; it 's a family failin'! Born-brother 'Lijah and me, we're twins thar! But for gittin' rid o' chores, I'd ruther steal a heifer than a gal.

LETTY

Oh, that heifer! When your father missed it from the barn, and you was arrested—

ABEL

*[Gleefully.]*

Born-brother 'Lijah, *he* signed the warrant!

LETTY

*[Grave, and wide-eyed.]*

No!—him?

ABEL

*[His grin splitting into laughter.]*

But he bought the heifer! O Lordy! He bought back his own heifer for five dollars more 'n I sold it

to Sam Williams for; and Sam he set up the drinks for me, with the balance!

*[Wiping the tears of his laughter.]*

O Lordy! That was w'uth the price of admit.ance to jail.

LETTY

But now you 've broke loose before trial, what 'll happen to ye?

ABEL

Never fret. Sam he 's constable, and he won't run me in twice, if the homefolks don't pinch me. Mean-whiles, with the price of 'Lijah's heifer, I 've bought me—

*[He feels in his back pocket.]*

—look!

*[He takes out two bits of cardboard, and holds them merrily before her eyes.]*

LETTY

What 's them?

ABEL

Two tickets to the White Mountains—for a weddin' spree.

LETTY

A weddin' spree? Ourn?

ABEL

Wouldn't be 'Lijah's, would it?

LETTY

*[Gazing on the tickets with bewildered happiness.]*

Us two: the White Mountains: O Chuck!

## ABEL

That 's my signature, and it 's goin' to be yourn hencefor'ards, world without end, et cet'ry. Jest *Chuck*—that 's our new callin'-card: ABEL CHUCK and LITTY CHUCK. The doorplate of old Dole is *chucked*! It 's our call to arms, Litty: (Damnation without remuneration—if that ain't misery, make the most on't!) Chuck the home tea-party overboard: Chuck the hull shootin' match—chores, church and fam'ly! Them 's our stars and stripes, and we 'll hist 'em on that thar Bunker's Hill.

*[He points to the woodchuck's mound.]*

## LETTY

*[Examining more closely the pieces of cardboard.]*

But they ain't return-tickets!

## ABEL

What 's the good o' returnin'?

## LETTY

But where 'll we put up, when the little 'un comes?

## ABEL

In the deacon's cow-barn?—I guess *not*! No, s'ree! The old man called me a varmin critter: told me to pack and jine the other chucks. Wall, so I will, and take my mate along. I reckon we can nose for our livin' as good as them other gipsies. I 've watched 'em sence I was so high—the chuckfolks. Durn if I don't think they 're happier 'n menfolks. They ain't domestic, nor they ain't wild; but they live on the fat o' both stock.

[*Pointing to the burrow.*]

Thar 's that sly old parson o' the pastur'—old Chuck-the-dirt: Lordy, ain't I seen him mornin's, with his fur bib tucked under his chin, breakfastin' on 'Lijah's celery and parsnips, when 'Lijah himself was goin' empty-bellied, drivin' his garden stuff t' market. Chucks cute? Now I guess! That 's why they're cussed by the durn-fool housefolks. Housefolks hoe and harrer; chuckfolks feed and farrer. Housefolks borry trouble; chuckfolks lend it out at interest. Housefolks help the devil; chuckfolks help 'emselves. 'Course, every beggar must bide his chanct, but I guess, Litty, you and me are cute 'nough to dig a snug burrer somewhars, and raise up a litter on somebody *else's* lot, whar we can share the crops and dodge the taxes. Anyhow, you 're 'cute 'nough *lookin'!*

[*He caresses her. Suddenly, she seizes his arm, startled.*]

LETTY

Listen: what 's that?

ABEL

[*Listening.*]

What like?

LETTY

Like a great bird, screamin' far off, and callin'—callin' to its young uns.

ABEL

Like what it *is*, Litty—callin' to you and me. It 's Love-each-other, gal. It 's the great mountain bird a-swoopin' down on us. It 's the White Mountain train, whistlin' crost the valley.—It 'll be at the Junction in ten minutes.

LETTY

Are we goin', true 'nough?

ABEL

Tuck up your hair. How 's the foot?

LETTY

*[Joyously.]*

Oh, I ain't got none: I 'm flyin'.

ABEL

Put on your veil, lily-bride.

*[He helps her fasten the woven lilies on her head, he himself putting on his former head-gear of lily-pads.]*

LETTY

But where 'll be the weddin'. There ain't time.

ABEL

Th' ain't nothin' but time: ten minutes.

LETTY

But where—

ABEL

Didn't I say the meetin' would be right here?

LETTY

But where's the proper minister? *[With a bright thought.]* They say, gipsy gals jump over a broom to get married.

ABEL

*[Warningly.]*

Shh! Don't embarrass his worship. He 's a shy sort.

*[Mysteriously, he points to the top of the mound, where the*



*woodchuck, partly visible, sits sunning himself on his haunches. Abel speaks low.]*

Ain't he proper 'nough?

LETTY

Him? What for?

ABEL

Why, for the ceremony. He 's the most expensive prophet in the county: when he jest stirs out and looks at his shadder, the market-folks tremble in their boots. But we ain't sparin' expense to-day, Litty. I 've spoke our license from *him*. So now for the ceremony!

LETTY

*[Laughing for the first time—a happy, hysterical, young laugh.]*

Ain't you funny, Chuck!

ABEL

Ssh! Not so loud. He 'll stay and jine us, if we behave. He 'preciates my comin' without no gun.—Now, do as I do.

*[He tiptoes forward; she follows, holding his hand.]*

LETTY

Chuck, ain't you funny!

ABEL

*[With a profound bow and boy-like flourish, addresses the woodchuck.]*

Reverend Mr. Wood—of the renowned family of Chucks—we, male and female, of your honor's own kin and communion, bein' nat'ral born sinners (and glad of it), poachin' in your honor's parish (off and on), for some twenty seasons (more or less), and

havin' published our banns (from time to time), in the presence of chipmunks, woodcocks and water-wagtails, duly assembled therefor, do now respectfully petition your experienced worship to unite us, one t' other, in the blessin's of wedlock, accordin' to the ancient rites and ceremonies of orchard communities.

Yours truly—Amen!

*[Abel now turns about, and assumes a low, guttural tone.]*

Do you, boy, kiss this gal because ye love her?

*[In his own voice.]*

I do.

*[He kisses Letty. Then speaks again, guttural.]*

Do you, gal, kiss this boy, because ye love him?

*[He nudges Letty.]*

LETTY

*[Shyly.]*

I do.

*[She kisses Abel.]*

*Through the orchard the church organ begins again to roll.]*

ABEL

*[Guttural.]*

Will you, boy, stick to this gal, so long 's ye love her?

*[In his own voice.]*

I will.

*[He hugs Letty; then speaks again, guttural.]*

Will you, gal, stick to this boy, so long 's ye love him?

*[He nudges Letty again.]*

LETTY

*[In a low voice.]*

I will.

*[She draws closer to him.]*

## CHUCK

ABEL

[Guttural.]

Then do I now pronounce you, man-chuck and woman-chuck, *mates!* Kiss, and be kind to your little chucks.—Amen!

ABEL AND LETTY

[Together.]

Amen!

[*They kiss each other on the mouth.*[*The woodchuck vanishes into his burrow.*[*From nearby, the Voices of the congregation sing to the organ.*[*As they become aware of this, Abel and Letty look at each other, listening.*]

## THE CHURCH VOICES

Lord, dismiss us with Thy blessing;

Fill our hearts with joy and peace;

Let us each, thy love possessing,

Triumph in redeeming grace:

O refresh us,

O refresh us,

Traveling through this wilderness.

A—men!

LETTY

[*Tugging at Abel's arm.*]

Run! Meetin' 's out: Run, Chuck!

[*Hand in hand, they run up the mound, at the top of which Letty's ankle gives way, and she sinks down.*]

ABEL

What—the hoof agin, little heifer?

[*He lifts her in his arms. Holding her a moment, they stand gazing off toward the valley, where a long, deep whistle sounds.*]

## LETTY

It 's callin' us, Chuck: the great bird—Love-each-other!

## ABEL

It 's callin' us to the hills, gal,—the hills!

*[The report of a gun resounds.*

*Abel starts back, and stumbles.*

*Letty screams and hides her face.*

*Holding her on his left arm, Abel raises his right defiantly, and shouts:]*

Never skun me!

*[Waving toward the church.]*

So long, Brother 'Lijah: The minister 's waitin'!

*[Putting his thumb to his nose, he twiddles his fingers, mockingly; then springing with Letty down the further slope, he disappears.*

*The shadows in the orchard are lengthening.*

*A locust rasps in an elm.*

*Faint crickets cheep in the grass.*

*An oriole flutes from an apple tree.*

*From his hole, the woodchuck crawls cautiously out, nosing, as he does so, a crumpled and earth-soiled veil, which clings to his bristly hair, half clothing him.*

*Pulling from his burrow an ear of corn, he sits up on his haunches, silently nibbling it—his small eyes half shut in the sunshine.*

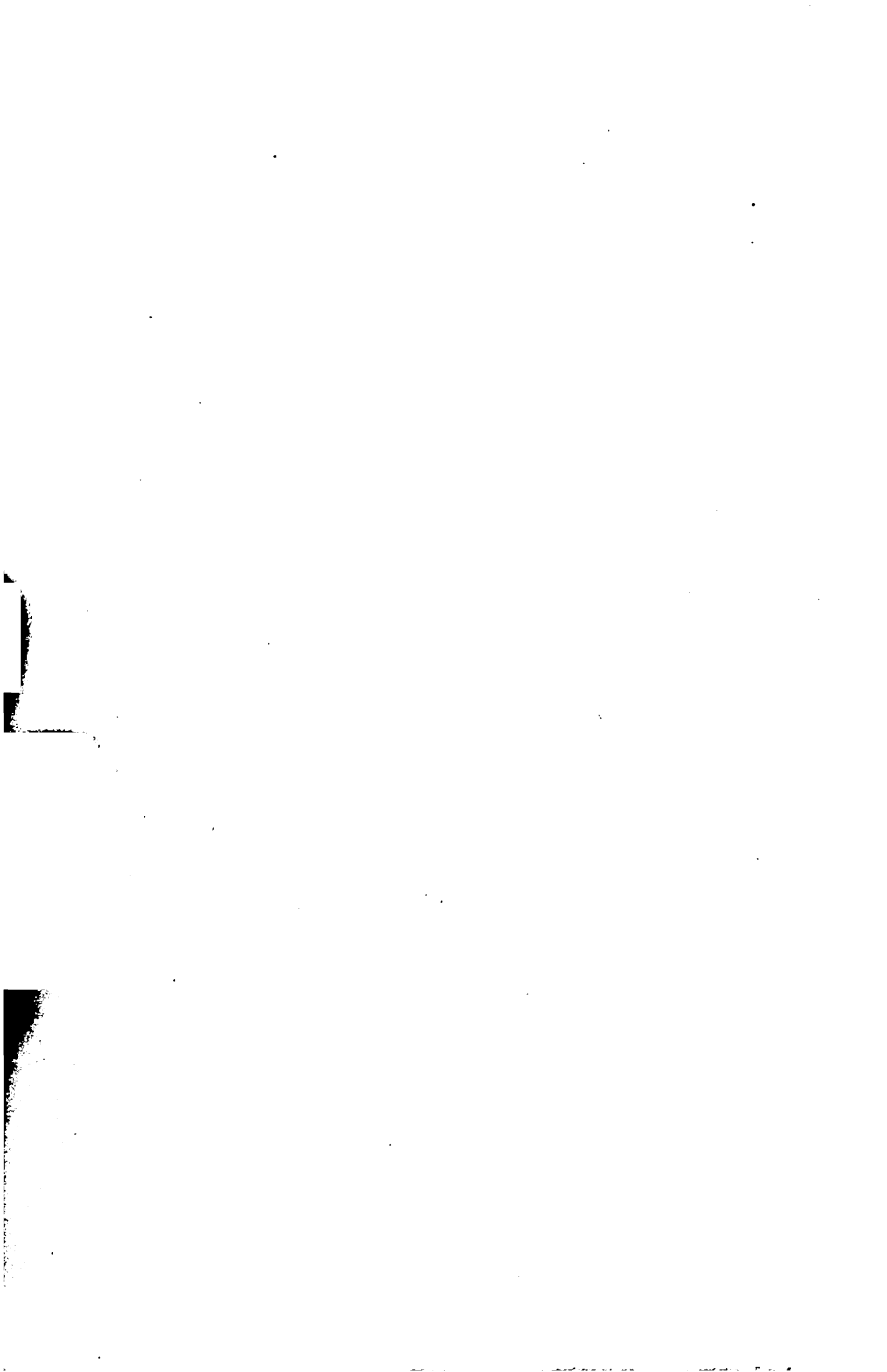
*Faintly from below, sounds the voice of Abel, singing:*

Come 'cross lots, come 'cross lots,

Says I to Litty, to Litty, my gal!

*The woodchuck nibbles on.*

CURTAIN.



# **GETTYSBURG**

**A Woodshed Commentary**

## CHARACTERS

---

LINK TADBOURNE, *ox-yoke maker.*

POLLY, *his grandniece.*

---

*The Place is country New Hampshire, at the present time.*

# GETTYSBURG\*

## SCENE:

*A woodshed, in the ell of a farm house.*

*The shed is open on both sides, front and back, the apertures being slightly arched at the top. [In bad weather, these presumably may be closed by big double doors, which stand open now—swung back outward beyond sight.] Thus the nearer opening is the proscenium arch of the scene, under which the spectator looks through the shed to the background—a grassy yard, a road with great trunks of soaring elms, and the glimpse of a green hillside. The ceiling runs up into a gable with large beams.*

*On the right, at back, a door opens into the shed from the house kitchen. Opposite it, a door leads from the shed into the barn. In the foreground, against the right wall, is a work-bench. On this are tools, a long, narrow, wooden box, and a small oil stove, with steaming kettle upon it.*

*Against the left wall, what remains of the year's wood supply is stacked, the uneven ridges sloping to a jumble of stove-wood and kindlings mixed with small chips on the floor, which is piled deep with mounds of crumbling bark, chips and wood-dust.*

*Not far from this mounded pile, at right centre of the scene, stands a wooden arm-chair, in which LINK TADBOURNE, in his shirt-sleeves, sits drowsing. Silhouetted by the sunlight beyond, his sharp-drawn profile is that of an old man, with white hair cropped close, and grey moustache*

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*of a faded black hue at the outer edges. Between his knees is a stout thong of wood, whittled round by the drawshave which his sleeping hand still holds in his lap. Against the side of his chair rests a thick wooden yoke and collar. Near him is a chopping-block.*

*In the woodshed there is no sound or motion except the hum and floating steam from the tea-kettle. Presently the old man murmurs in his sleep, clenching his hand. Slowly the hand relaxes again.*

*From the door, right, comes POLLY—a sweet-faced girl of seventeen, quietly mature for her age. She is dressed simply. In one hand, she carries a man's wide-brimmed felt hat; over the other arm, a blue coat. These she brings toward Link. Seeing him asleep, she begins to tiptoe, lays the coat and hat on the chopping-block, goes to the bench and trims the wick of the oil-stove, under the kettle. Then she returns and stands near Link, surveying the shed.*

*On closer scrutiny, the jumbled woodpile has evidently a certain order in its chaos: some of the splittings have been piled in irregular ridges; in places, the deep layer of wood-dust and chips has been scooped, and the little mounds slope and rise like miniature valleys and hills.\**

*Taking up a hoe, Polly—with careful steps—moves among the hollows, placing and arranging sticks of kindling, scraping and smoothing the little mounds with the hoe.*

*As she does so, from far away, a bugle sounds.*

\* A suggestion for the appropriate arrangement of these mounds may be found in the map of the battle-field annexed to the volume by Capt. R. K. Beecham, entitled "Gettysburg," A. C. McClurg, 1911.

LINK

*[Snapping his eyes wide open, sits up.]*

Hello! Cat-nappin' was I, Polly?

POLLY

Just

a kitten-nap, I guess.

*[Laying the hoe down, she approaches.]*

The yoke done?

LINK

*[Giving a final whittle to the yoke-collar thong.]*

Thar!

When he's ben steamed a spell, and bended snug,  
I guess this feller 'll sarve t' say "Gee" to—

*[Lifting the other yoke-collar from beside his chair, he holds the whittled thong next to it, comparing the two with expert eye.]*

and "Haw" to him. Beech every time, Sir; beech  
or walnut. Hang me if I 'd shake a whip  
at birch, for ox-yokes.—Polly, are ye thar?

POLLY

Yes, Uncle Link.

LINK

What's that I used to sing ye?

"Polly, put the kittle on,  
Polly, put the kittle on,  
Polly, put the kittle on—"

*[Chuckling.]*

We'll give this feller a dose of ox-yoke tea!

POLLY

The kettle 's boilin'.

LINK

Wall, then, steep him good.

*[Polly takes from Link the collar-thong, carries it to the work-bench, shoves it into the narrow end of the box, which she then closes tight and connects—by a piece of hose—to the spout of the kettle. At the further end of the box, steam then emerges through a small hole.]*

POLLY

You 're feelin' smart to-day.

LINK

Smart!—Wall, if I  
could git a hull man to swap legs with me,  
mebbe I 'd arn my keep. But this here settin'  
dead an' alive, without no legs, day in,  
day out, don't make an old hoss wuth his oats.

POLLY

*[Cheerfully.]*

I guess you 'll soon be walkin' round.

LINK

Not if  
that doctor feller has his say: He says  
I can't never go agin this side o' Jordan;  
and looks like he 's 'bout right.—Nine months to-  
morrer,  
Polly, gal, sence I had that stroke.

POLLY

*[Pointing to the ox-yoke.]*

You 're fitter  
sittin' than most folks standin'.

LINK  
[Briskly.]

Oh, they can't  
keep my two hands from makin' ox-yokes. That 's  
my second natur' sence I was a boy.

[Again in the distance a bugle sounds. Link starts.]  
What 's that?

POLLY  
Why, that 's the army veterans  
down to the graveyard. This is Decoration  
mornin': you ain't forgot?

LINK  
So 't is, so 't is.  
Roger, your young man—ha! [Chuckling] he come  
and axed me  
was I agoin' to the cemetery.  
"Me? Don't I look it?" says I. Ha! "Don't I look  
it?"

POLLY  
He meant—to decorate the graves.

LINK  
O' course;  
but I must take my little laugh. I told him  
I guessed I wa'n't persent'ble anyhow,  
my mústache and my boots wa'n't blacked this mornin'.  
I don't jest like t' talk about my legs.—  
Be you a-goin' to take your young school folks,  
Polly?

POLLY  
Dear no! I told my boys and girls  
to march up this way with the band. I said

I 'd be a-stayin' home and learnin' how  
to keep school in the woodpile here with you.

LINK

*[Looking up at her proudly.]*

Schoolma'am at seventeen! Some smart, I tell ye!

POLLY

*[Caressing him.]*

School-master, you, past seventy; that 's smarter!  
I tell 'em I learn from you, so 's I can teach  
my young folks what the study-books leave out.

LINK

Sure ye don't want to jine the celebratin'?

POLLY

No *Sir!* We 're goin' to celebrate right here,  
and you 're to teach me to keep school some more.

*[She holds ready for him the blue coat and hat.]*

LINK

*[Looking up.]*

What 's thar?

POLLY

Your teachin' rig.

*[She helps him on with it.]*

LINK

The old blue coat!—

My, but I 'd like to see the boys:

*[Gazing at the hat.]*

the Grand

Old Army Boys! *[Dreamily]* Yes, we was boys: jest  
boys!

Polly, you tell your young folks, when they study the books, that we was nothin' else but boys jest fallin' in love, with best gals left t' home—the same as you; and when the shot was singin', we pulled their pictur's out, and prayed to them 'most more 'n the Allmighty.

*[Link looks up suddenly—a strange light in his face. Again, to a far strain of music, the bugle sounds.]*

Thar she blows

Agin!

POLLY

They 're marchin' to the graves with flowers.

LINK

My Godfrey! 't ain't no much thinkin' o' flowers and the young folks, their faces, and the blue line of old fellers marchin'—it 's the music! that old brass voice a-callin'! Seems as though, legs or no legs, I 'd have to up and foller to God-knows-whar, and holler—holler back to guns roarin' in the dark. No; durn it, no! I jest can't stan' the music.

POLLY

*[Goes to the work-bench, where the box is steaming.]*

Uncle Link,  
you want that I should steam this longer?

LINK

*[Absently.]*

Oh,

A kittleful, a kittleful.

## GETTYSBURG

POLLY

*[Coming over to him.]*

Now, then,

I 'm ready for school.—I hope I 've drawed the map  
all right.

LINK

Map? Oh, the map!

*[Surveying the woodpile reminiscently, he nods.]*

Yes, thar she be:

old Gettysburg!

POLLY

I know the places—most.

LINK

So, *do* ye? Good, now: whar 's your marker?

POLLY

*[Taking up the hoe.]*

Here.

LINK

Willoughby Run: whar 's that?

POLLY

*[Points with the hoe toward the left of the woodpile.]*

That 's farthest over

next the barn door.

LINK

My, how we fit the Johnnies  
thar, the fust mornin'! Jest behind them willers,  
acrost the Run, that 's whar we captur'd Archer.  
My, my!

POLLY

Over there—that 's Seminary Ridge.

*[She points to different heights and depressions, as Link nods his approval.]*

Peach Orchard, Devil's Den, Round Top, the Wheatfield—

LINK

Lord, Lord, the Wheatfield!

POLLY

*[Continuing.]*

Cemetery Hill,  
Little Round Top, Death Valley, and this here  
is Cemetery Ridge.

LINK

*[Pointing to the little flag.]*

And colors flyin'!

We kep 'em flyin' thar, too, all three days,  
from start to finish.

POLLY

Have I learned 'em right?

LINK

A number One, chick! Wait a mite: Culp's Hill:  
I don't jest spy Culp's Hill.

POLLY

There wa'n't enough  
kindlin's to spare for that. It ought to lay  
east there, towards the kitchen.

LINK

Let it go!

That 's whar us Yanks left our back door ajar  
and Johnson stuck his foot in: kep it thar,  
too, till he got it squoze off by old Slocum.



Let Culp's Hill lay for now.—Lend me your marker.  
[*Polly hands him the hoe. From his chair, he reaches with it  
and digs in the chips.*]

Death Valley needs some scoopin' deeper. So:  
smooth off them chips.

[*Polly does so with her foot.*]

You better guess 't was deep  
as hell, that second day, come sundown.—Here,  
[*He hands back the hoe to her.*]  
flat down the Wheatfield yonder.

[*Polly does so.*]

Goda'mighty!  
that Wheatfield: wall, we flatted it down flatter  
than any pancake what you ever cooked,  
Polly; and 't wan't no maple syrup neither  
was runnin', slipp'ry hot and slimy black  
all over it, that nightfall.

POLLY

Here 's the road  
to Emmetsburg.

LINK

No, 'tain't: this here 's the pike  
to Taneytown, where Sykes's boys come sweatin',  
after an all-night march, jest in the nick  
to save our second day. The Emmetsburg  
road 's thar.—Whar was I, 'fore I fell cat-nappin'?

POLLY

At sunset, July second, Sixty-three.

LINK

[*Nodding, reminiscent.*]

The Bloody Sundown! God, that crazy sun:

she set a dozen times that afternoon,  
red-yeller as a punkin jacko'lantern,  
rairin' and pitchin' through the roarin' smoke  
till she clean busted, like the other bombs,  
behind the hills.

## POLLY

My! Wa'n't you never scart  
and wished you 'd stayed t' home?

## LINK

Scart? Wall, I wonder!

Chick, look a-thar: them little stripes and stars.

I heerd a feller onct, down to the store,—  
a dressy mister, span-new from the city—  
layin' the law down: "All this *stars and stripes*,"  
says he, "and *red and white and blue* is rubbish,  
mere sentimental rot, spread-eagleism!"

"I wan't t' know!" says I. "In Sixty-three,  
I knowed a lad, named Link. Onct, after sundown  
I met him stumblin'—with two dead men's muskets  
for crutches—towards a bucket, full of ink—  
water, they called it. When he 'd drunk a spell,  
he tuk the rest to wash his bullet holes.—

Wall, sir, he had a piece o' splintered stick,  
with *red and white and blue*, tore 'most t' tatters,  
a-danglin' from it. "Be you color sergeant?"  
says I. "Not me," says Link; "the sergeant 's dead,  
but when he fell, he handed me this bit

*o' rubbish*—red and white and blue." And Link  
he laughed. "What be you laughin' for?" says I.  
"Oh, nothin'. Aint it lovely, though!" says Link.

POLLY

What did the span-new mister say to that?

LINK

I didn't stop to listen. Them as never  
heerd dead men callin' for the colors don't  
guess what they be.

*[Sitting up and blinking hard.]*

But this ain't keepin' school!

POLLY

*[Quietly.]*

I guess I 'm learnin' somethin', Uncle Link.

LINK

The second day, 'fore sunset.

*[He takes the hoe and points with it.]*

Yon's the Wheatfield.

Behind it thar lies Longstreet with his rebels.  
Here be the Yanks, and Cemetery Ridge  
behind 'em. Hancock—he 's our general—  
he 's got to hold the Ridge, till reinforcements  
from Taneytown. But lose the Wheatfield, lose  
the Ridge, and lose the Ridge—lose God-and-all!—  
Lee, the old fox, he 'd nab up Washington,  
Abe Lincoln and the White House in one bite!—  
So the Union, Polly,—me and you and Roger,  
your Uncle Link, and Uncle Sam—is all  
thar—growin' in that Wheatfield.

POLLY

*[Smiling proudly.]*

And they 're growin'

still!

## LINK

Not the wheat, though. Over them stone walls,  
thar comes the Johnnies, thick as grasshoppers:  
gray legs a-jumpin' through the tall wheat tops.  
And now thar ain't no tops, thar ain't no wheat,  
thar ain't no lookin': jest blind feelin' round  
in the black mud, and trampin' on boys' faces,  
and grapplin' with hell-devils, and stink o' smoke,  
and stingin' smother, and—up thar through the dark—  
that crazy punkin sun, like an old moon  
lopsided, crackin' her red shell with thunder!

*[In the distance, a bugle sounds, and the low martial music of a brass band begins. Again Link's face twitches, and he pauses, listening. From this moment on, the sound and emotion of the brass music, slowly growing louder, permeates the scene.]*

## POLLY

Oh! What was God a-thinkin' of, t' allow  
the created world to act that awful?

## LINK

Now,

I wonder!—Cast your eye along this hoe:

*[He stirs the chips and wood-dirt round with the hoe-iron.]*

Thar in that poked up mess o' dirt, you see

yon weeny chip of ox-yoke?—That 's the boy

I spoke on: Link, Link Tadbourne: "Chipmunk Link,"  
they call him, 'cause his legs is spry 's a squirrel's.—

Wall, mebbe some good angel, with bright eyes  
like yourn, stood lookin' down on him that day,  
keepin' the Devil's hoe from crackin' him.

*[Patting her hand, which rests on his hoe.]*

If so, I reckon, Polly, it was you.

But mebbe jest Old Nick, as he sat hoein'  
 them hills, and haulin' in the little heaps  
 o' squirmin' critters, kind o' reco'nized  
 Link as his livin' image, and so kep him  
 to put in an airthly hell, whar thar ain't no legs,  
 and worn-out devils sit froze in high-backed chairs,  
 list'nin' to bugles—bugles—bugles, callin'.

*[Link clutches the sides of his chair, staring. The music  
 draws nearer. Polly touches him soothingly.]*

### POLLY

Don't, dear; they 'll soon quit playin'. Never mind 'em.

### LINK

*[Relaxing under her touch.]*

No, never mind; that 's right. It 's jest that onct—  
 onct we was boys, onct we was boys—with legs.  
 But never mind. An old boy ain't a bugle.  
 Onct, though, he was: and all God's life a-snortin'  
 outn his nostrils, and Hell's mischief laughin'  
 outn his eyes, and all the mornin' winds  
 ablwin' *Glory Hallelujahs*, like  
 brass music, from his mouth.—But never mind!  
 'T ain't nothin': boys in blue ain't bugles now.  
 Old brass gits rusty, and old underpinnin'  
 gits rotten, and trapped chipmunks lose their legs.

*[With smouldering fire.]*

But jest the same—

*[His face convulses and he cries out, terribly—straining in  
 his chair to rise.]*

—for holy God, that band!

Why don't they stop that band!

POLLY

[Going.]

I 'll run and tell them.

Sit quiet, dear. I 'll be right back.

[Glancing back anxiously, Polly disappears outside. The approaching band begins to play "John Brown's Body." Link sits motionless, gripping his chair.]

LINK

Set quiet!

Dead folks don't set, and livin' folks kin stand,  
and Link—he kin set quiet.—Goda'mighty,  
how *kin* he set, and them a-marchin' thar  
with old John Brown? Lord God, you ain't forgot  
the boys, have ye? the boys, how they come marchin'  
home to ye, live and dead, behind old Brown,  
a-singin' *Glory* to ye! Jest look down:  
thar 's Gettysburg, thar 's Cemetery Ridge:  
don't say ye disremember *them*! And thar 's  
the colors: Look, he 's picked 'em up—the sergeant's  
blood splotched 'em some—but thar they be, still flyin'!  
Link done that: Link—the spry boy, what they call  
Chipmunk: you ain't forgot his double-step,  
have ye?

[Again he cries out, beseechingly.]—

My God, why do You keep on marchin'  
and leave him settin' here?

[To the music outside, the voices of children begin to sing the words of "John Brown's Body." At the sound, Link's face becomes transformed with emotion, his body shakes and his shoulders heave and straighten.]

No!—I—won't—set!

*[Wresting himself mightily, he rises from his chair, and stands.]*

Them are the boys that marched to Kingdom-Come ahead of us, but we keep fallin' in line.

Them voices—Lord, I guess you 've brought along your Sunday choir of young angel folks to help the boys out.

*[Following the music with swaying arms.]*

Glory!—Never mind me singin': you kin drown me out. But I 'm goin' t' jine in, or bust!

*[Joining with the children's voices, he moves unconsciously along the edge of the woodpile. With stiff steps—his one hand leaning on the hoe, his other reached as to unseen hands, that draw him—he totters toward the sunlight and the green lawn, at back. As he does so, his thin, cracked voice takes up the battle-hymn where the children's are singing it:]*

“—a-mould'rin' in the grave,  
John Brown's body lies a-mould'rin' in the grave,  
John Brown's body lies a-mould'rin' in the grave,  
But his soul goes—”

*[Suddenly he stops, aware that he is walking, and cries aloud, astounded:]*

Lord, Lord, my legs!  
Whar did Ye git my legs?

*[Shaking with delight, he drops his hoe, seizes up the little flag from the woodpile, and waves it joyously.]*

I 'm comin', boys!  
Link 's loose agin: Chipmunk has sprung his trap.  
*[With tottering gait, he climbs the little mound in the woodpile.]*

Now, boys, three cheers for Cemetery Ridge!  
Jine in, jine in!

[*Swinging the flag.*]

Hooray!—Hooray!—Hooray!

[*Outside, the music grows louder, and the voices of old men and children sing martially to the brass music.*

*With his final cheer, Link stumbles down from the mound, brandishes in one hand his hat, in the other the little flag, and stumps off toward the approaching procession into the sunlight, joining his old cracked voice, jubilant, with the singers:]*

“—ry hallelujah,  
Glory, glory hallelujah,  
His truth is marchin’ on!”

CURTAIN.





# **THE ANTICK**

**A Wayside Sketch**

## CHARACTERS

---

JONAS BOUTWELL: *minister.*

JOHN HALE: *a young farmer.*

MRS. CASSANDRA WHITE: *a widow.*

MYRTLE: *her daughter.*

JULIE BONHEUR: *a Canuck girl.*

Numerous *Anticks\** and *Horribles.*

---

*The TIME is late in the nineteenth century, before automobiles: the PLACE—a dusty country road, in Massachusetts, early in July.*

\*The customary spelling of this word in Massachusetts, corresponding to its pronunciation there, is Antiques. The grotesque participators in the Bunker Hill Day celebrations at Charlestown, as well as similar Fourth of July celebrators, are so called—and spelled. Since, however, the word does not, in this connotation mean “old,” or “ancient,” but is undoubtedly a survival of the term applied to Old England’s merry-andrews or “anticks,” [the Fools of the old plays], therefore the older form of spelling and pronunciation has been adopted in the title and stage-directions of this play. In the mouths of its characters, however, “antiques” has been used, in accordance with New England custom.

## THE ANTICK\*

*Along the back of the scene runs an old stone wall, well preserved and partly covered with three-leafed ivy; beyond this, across a field of standing grass, peers a little wood of birches, popples and pitch-pines, topped by the rounded summit of a distant hill. Between the road and the wall grows a broad fringe of grass, through which—amid milk-weed, daisies and Queen Anne's lace—a worn footpath accompanies the road. Another narrower grass-fringe skirts the front of the scene.*

*On the left [of the spectator], rise the trunks of great sugar-maples, that form an arcade of green boughs, framing the scene on that side.*

*In the right foreground, the road widens with a curve for a stopping-place beside a stone watering-trough, shaded by white birch trees and wild poplars.*

*Above it, is a narrow banking of grass. A thin stream of water slips from the moss of a hollowed half-log into this trough, brimming its shallow basin, and—glistening down the broad, slippery surface, across a chiselled motto—drips to a runnel in the grass.*

*Beside the trough, a plain wooden settle stands in the shade. Across the road from this, in the right middleground, two flagstone steps lead to a little white gate, with pickets, almost hidden among tall lilac bushes, behind which is just discernible the gable-top of a small, white house, set back from the roadside.*

*In the hot morning sunshine, soft billowy cloudcaps are beginning to trail slow shadows across the landscape.*

*Remote and intermittent, a sound like subdued thunder recurs. In the intervals, from beyond the maples outside, the occasional tink-tink of a cow-bell comes from close by. Probably, a cow, unseen, is cropping by the wayside.*

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*On the right, an odd figure in black is trudging slowly, and with many standstills, in the direction of the bell. It is a spare, slightly stooped old man, clad in an ancient, long-tailed coat and rumpled trousers. Out of doors, even when he is driving his cow to pasture, Minister JONAS BOUTWELL always wears his silk "stovepipe" hat pulled amply down on the iron-grey curls, that straggle about his ears. His deep-cut vest is habitually half buttoned, and just now his not-too-white necktie dangles, half tied, from his turn-over collar.*

*His gait is rambling, and at times he stubs a toe in the dust, or against a grass rut, for his sharp, dancing eyes are glued to the pages of a book. This he holds close to his spectacles, gripped in both hands, from one of which a knotted walking-stick points at an angle skyward.*

*As he reads, his lips mutter half audibly, his bushy eyebrows are raised and contorted, and his face glasses like a child's the emotions roused by his reading.*

*While he is doing thus, JOHN HALE enters—left—along the road, also reading from a book, silently to himself. John is a strong-knit young man of middle height, with light, waving hair, wide brow and earnest eyes. He is dressed in farming clothes. His manner is quiet, repressed, but sensitive and conscious of personal power. He walks leisurely, as wholly absorbed in his own volume as the minister with his; so that he almost stumbles against the old man, just as Jonas, inverting his stick, makes a flourish, that knocks the volume out of the hands of John, who looks up astonished.]*

JOHN

*[Exclaiming.]*

Well, now!—

*[Picking up his own volume from the road, John blows upon it carefully, wiping it with his sleeve.]*

Poor old Emerson!

JONAS

How 's that? Ralph Waldo in the dust? Never, Sir!

*[Pointing his stick upward.]*

He sits immortal in the empyrean!

*[Taking the book from John and turning its pages.]*

“Nature,” “Idealism,” “Spirit”:—chewing your old Concord cud, John!—That 's good, that 's good: but cud 's not clover, boy. Why don't you kick up your heels, on the Glorious Fourth?

*[The muffled thunder recurs.]*

Hear that! Don't that make ye feel your gunpowder oats?

JOHN

*[Obviously intent on the minister's volume.]*

Old plays?

JONAS

*[Fondling it.]*

Yes, yes:—an old failing, an old failing! The Muse, the Muse is my psalm and my commandment! Therefore do I play hookie, John, from my parish

widows, and woo the Eternal Feminine in Elizabethan pastures. You play hookie too, John: Where 's your Faithful, eh? where 's yours? Have you wooed and won yet?

A SHRILL VOICE

*[From behind the lilacs.]*

Jonas! Jonas Boutwell! Your cow 's a-stretchin' over my wall and eatin' of my timothy-grass.

JOHN

*[Laconically.]*

Yes, sir; I 've wooed and won.

JONAS

*[Blankly.]*

Not—in there?

*[John nods.]*

THE VOICE

Drive the critter off!

JONAS

*[Bowing to the lilacs.]*

Madam, your obedient servant!

*[Beckoning solemnly with his walking-stick, he speaks in a higher key.]*

Bos, bos, co', bossie! Ga 'lang, Doll!

*[Searching for something to throw, he takes from his pocket an old glove, and flings it toward the maples, where it falls short.]*

Clover 'cross the way, Dollie. Try clover!

THE VOICE

Patience' sake!

*[Behind the bushes, a door bangs audibly.]*

JONAS

*[Turns preternaturally to John.]*

Not—*her!*

JOHN

Her girl.

JONAS

Worse yet: The offspring of Cassandra?

JOHN

Myrtle White.

JONAS

Forbid it, angels!

JOHN

*[Wearily.]*

I presume we 'll be coming up soon to get you to join us.

JONAS

Me! Me minister to this dilution of man! Why, the mother is vinegar and the daughter is whey. The butter soured when she was churned.

JOHN

*[Wryly.]*

Well, she 's real old Yankee stock.—And we're engaged.



JONAS

Even so: The way of the young man is beset with girlhood!

JOHN

Seems to be the only way out. I'm twenty-five, Sir. College—that 's over. Father [*biting his lip*—he's gone. Mother 's laid up and needs help: some one to keep round with her, when I'm choring. So it 's up to me to marry for her sake: to "settle down" and plough and milk and sow—

JONAS

Yea, even so, John Hale!—to sow live seed in these infecund acres! The seed of Plymouth is scattered inland: it teems in the harvests of the West. But the old home lots are void and run to sorrel; the old home ells are stale with the smell of left-overs; the old home breed is mash in the cider-press, and their sap is vinegar. ✓

JOHN

[*With a stifled glow.*]

Good God, Sir, don't I know it! Don't you think I've wanted to light out, too, for Alaska or Hawaii. But here 's Mother, left alone, rooted to the old place—wants to die here. 'T isn't pick and choose. I've looked through the other left-overs. Myrtle is the only young girl—that is, *good* girl—in town.

JONAS

*Good! Good?* Lord, what is good in Thy sight?

"My beloved is mine and I am his,

He feedeth his flock among the lilies. . . .

Behold thou art fair, my love,  
Behold thou art fair :  
Thine eyes are as doves."

JOHN

[*Turning away.*]

Don't—Don't!

JONAS

"O daughters of Jerusalem, I am sick with love,  
For my head is filled with dew. . . .  
I am my beloved's and he is mine.  
I would kiss thee, yea, and none would despise me;  
I would lead thee and bring thee into my mother's  
house."

JOHN

Don't, Sir—for God's sake! I can't stand it.

[*He goes to the watering trough, resting his head on the  
stone.*]

JONAS

*Don't*—for God's sake! *Don't* stand it! That 's  
what ails us all. The Lord is the tempter of life, but  
our virtues scorn his allurements. He tempts us with  
the lute strings of Joy, he beckons us with the bent bow  
of Cupid, he despatches his servant Satan to beguile  
us with beauty to his pasturage: "He feedeth his flock  
among the lilies."

JOHN

Stop, stop! You 're playing the devil with me.

JONAS

The devil plays Diogenes with me, John. Up and

down, from Sabbath to Sabbath, searching for true sinners—and nary a catch! And so I crawl back into my barrel of sermons.—Out on us—all! There are no more sinners in New England: They 're all gone to heaven—or New York.

JOHN

Here 's *one*.

JONAS

[*Brightening.*]

John! May I thank God for ye?

JOHN

You know *my* temptation. Well, I 'm done with that now—for always. I 've put it behind me.

JONAS

*Retro me, Sathanas!* Lord, but it sounds sweet again! *Get thee behind me!*

[*Abruptly, with tender command.*]

Where is she?

JOHN

That's over, I tell you. I 've got to marry Myrtle. It 's my duty.

JONAS

[*Peering above his spectacles, keenly.*]

Where 's Julie?

[*John makes no answer, but gnaws the edge of his finger.*]

Julie Bonheur?

JOHN

[*With repression.*]

I 've not seen her—for a week.

JONAS

In seven days made He the world, and the firmament thereof with fire, and man, and woman.

JOHN

She 's gone out of my life.

JONAS

Where to?

JOHN

To the bad!

JONAS

[*Twinkling.*]

Not to Boston!

JOHN

[*Tragically.*]

It 's no joke. She—she 's untrue. I 've broken with her.

JONAS

[*With gentle sternness.*]

You 've broken her, you mean, John.

JOHN

That 's past mending.

JONAS

Past marrying?

JOHN

[*Flushing.*]

What—*now!* I tell you, she 's gone with another—  
a Canuck: [*bitterly*] one of her own kind! God, I  
could have killed her—and myself.

JONAS

Louis Fourteenth was King of Canucks! Don't I  
remember a song?

“I am king with a kiss,  
Though my crown be a crux:  
For the queen of my bliss  
Is the queen of Canucks!”

The poet, he was one *John Hale*; wasn't he?

JOHN

You might spare me—digging up graves. Goodbye.

JONAS

[*Holding him, affectionately.*]

Now, now, John: you must tell me!

JOHN

[*Dogged and dejected.*]

What?

JONAS

Aren't you, come now, just a mite—fool jealous?

JOHN

[*Darkly.*]

No!

JONAS

*[Cheerfully.]*

Well, then, tell me.

JOHN

*[Swallowing for a moment.]*

Why, then—first, it was Mother. She wouldn't have her, on any grounds: said I ought to stick to my own stock; all that. I never saw her quite so: she actually cursed Julie.

JONAS

Hm! No wonder neither! What did *you* do?

JOHN

I told Julie.

JONAS

So! What did *she* do?

JOHN

*[Pauses a moment; then with bitterness.]*

She laughed!

JONAS

Hm! No wonder neither! What then?

JOHN

Then she got drunk. That Canuck fellow, Pierre, was with her. Both got drunk. What could I expect of a saloon girl, with a mill-hand! *[Passionately.]* Ah, but I *thought* she was different, and I loved her!

JONAS

*[Ruminating.]*

Wine, eh?

JOHN

Yes, they all drink it—*her* folks.

JONAS

*Our* folks prefer rum—or wood alcohol!

JOHN

*[Hoarsely, standing away.]*

You are speaking of my father? Is this a time for—

JONAS

For the truth? May be truth has its time, John. I loved your father. He was bookish, like me—and you. We half-alivers run to books—or Bedlam. Your father run to both.

*[With gentle firmness.]*

Do you want to know *why* he drunk it—and hanged himself in the barn?

JOHN

*[Flinching, pale, but returning his gaze.]*

Why?

JONAS

You 're sure-enough set, eh, to marry Myrtle?

JOHN

Yes.

JONAS

*[Quietly, with deep feeling.]*

He loved—a Canuck girl.

JOHN

My father? *[Quivering.] Before—he married?*

JONAS

Yes—and after.

JOHN

[*Murmurs.*]

After!

[*From away left, a distant clamor begins: the beat of a drum, the faint squealing of fifes, shouting and the blowing of horns. Gradually the sounds grow louder.*]

JONAS

She was a wild, healthy thing, all alive—like your Julie. And looks!—well, the fair Shulamite wasn't fairer to Solomon. So he was about to take her in marriage, but about then, your grandfather Hale—

[*Jonas gives a queer smile.*]

JOHN

[*Faintly.*]

No! Not—?

JONAS

Yes, sir; yes! “Stick to your own stock,” says he. “Farmers we may be and country folks, but Adamses we are, and Hales, and Bradfords: The breed of Salem and Bunker Hill crossed with Canucks? Shades of the Mayflower forefend!—And they forefended! Crossbreeding isn't their legacy. Your father was shamed—shamed into it, John; and so he deserted your mother.

JOHN

My mother? The Canuck—you mean.

JONAS

What did I say?



JOHN

No matter. How long after—did he marry my mother?

JONAS

*[With a far-off stare.]*

He never married her.

JOHN

*[Starting.]*

What!—Oh, you mean the Canuck again.

JONAS

*[Slowly.]*

Yes, the Canuck I mean. But he raised her child.

JOHN

*[Drawing back.]*

Not—not a son?

JONAS

You have no brother, nor sister, John.

JOHN

*[Darkly.]*

You lie.

JONAS

*[Quietly.]*

Have you?

JOHN

Your insinuation—that! You lie in that.

JONAS

Do I lie to you, John,—ever?

JOHN

*[As the truth dawns painfully.]*

No.

*[The old man looks at him with tenderness, makes an awkward motion of caress—then refrains. John sinks down on the settle, shaken, hiding his face. His words are hardly audible.]*

Canuck!—a Canuck!

JONAS

*[Looks about helplessly, sees an iron dipper by the trough, dips it and hands it to John.]*

Have some water?

*[John motions it away.]*

He built this trough—your father did.

*[Pointing to the words cut in the stone.]*

He made the motto there.

*[Coughing.]*

I 'm thirsty.

*[He drinks from the dipper with deep breaths, then drops it, absently, under a bush, gazing at the stanza in the stone.]*

Ha, Lord of Waysides! To thirst—and mightily: to drink—and lustily!

*[Wiping his mouth with his hand.]*

Ha, 't is good!

*[He looks off along the road.**The fifes and horns have ceased, but a sudden hubbub of shouts and the violent ringing of a cow-bell are heard close by.]*

Creation! The imps have taken the bell off Doll.

*[He grasps his stick, and starts away.]*

JOHN

*[Getting to his feet.]*

What 's that coming?

JONAS

Good omens, John, good omens: angels of the Fourth—joy-birds of revolution—gargoyles, gargoyles, bless 'em! We've drove 'em from the doors of the Lord's house, but the Devil has gathered 'em in his highways to dance before him with handsprings, to laugh unto the Lord, and stick their tongues out for joy.

*[Looking off scene, delightedly.]*

Look at 'em, John, look! They 've nabbed Doll. They 're riding the cow, and a goat at her heels!

*[Shouting, and waving his stick.]*

Independence Day! God save the Antiques and Horribles!

JOHN

*[Grimly.]*

The watchdogs of Seventy-six turned to yelping jackalls! Ah!

*[He stands still; his voice sounds broken.]*

I—I 'm one of them.

*[He sinks down again by the trough.]*

What 's left to me now?

## JONAS

What's left to ye? Love, and the king's highway!  
"Stick to your own stock"—King of Canucks!

[Hailing the crowd outside.]

Independence, boys and girls!

[Gesticulating with his tall hat and stick, he goes off. The noise outside increases, then subsides. With pressed hands, John shuts the sounds from his ears. So for a moment he sits, crouched over and still. Then he raises his eyes from the settle to the stone lettering on the trough, and reads, in a dull tone:]

Lord of Waysides, life is Thine.  
Turn this water to Thy wine!  
Thirsting brute and man and swine  
All are brothers at Thy shrine.

[Murmuring.]

"Man and swine . . ."

[Rising.]

God, then,—so be it!

[He stares in the water.

The gate in the lilacs opens, and a wry-faced woman, followed by a faded girl, comes down the stone flags to the road. The woman is prematurely wrinkled; her tarnished red hair is turning gray. She is scrawny, and her clothes—crass in color—hang shapeless. When she speaks she squints. Just now, she cranes her neck—turkey-like—toward the noises down the road.

The girl, who dogs her with dull placidity, has a pretty, colorless face, with regular features. Her lips, however, never close, and her eyebrows are permanently raised in meaningless inquiry. Her brownish hair has been painfully

*curled with tasteless art. Whatever youthful charm her girlish form may have is hid by her fussy clothes—a magenta dress, with yellow spots and infinite tucks. By her manner of walking and standing, the dress is evidently her “best,” preserved for Sundays and holidays.*

MRS. CASSANDRA WHITE and her daughter MYRTLE pause in the road, the former listening and peering, the latter sidling and picking grass-tops.

*As Mrs. White speaks, John starts at her voice, seizes his book and opens it. The movement attracts the girl's attention.]*

MRS. WHITE

*Did you ever!—Myrtle, speak up: did you ever!*

MYRTLE

*[Chewing a grass-blade.]*

No, Ma.

MRS. WHITE

*I never!*

*[Shrilly.]*

*“Independence, boys and girls!” Him a minister, goin’ on seventy! There! he ’s joinin’ in with ’em. There ’s two a-ridin’ the cow. And I more ’n believe old Jonas is forgot to milk her, by her looks.—Ain’t you watchin’? Drop it!*

MYRTLE

*[Watching John, drops the grass-blade.]*

Yes, Ma.

MRS. WHITE

*And if there ain’t a goat! What the land ’s on the back of it: male or female?*

## MYRTLE

*[Picking a burr off her skirt.]*

On the goat?

MRS. WHITE

Why, she 's just scand'lous, if she 's womanfolks: Rigged out in sky-blue jumpers, and a white sugar-loaf hat, and red foot-gear—scarlet red! Mebbe she ain't a gal, just a long-haired feller, got one o' them halfway wigs on. Guess so?

*[Raising her voice.]*

Guess so?

MYRTLE

*[Carefully disarranging a curl.]*

Guess likely.

MRS. WHITE

What be we comin' to next? Live stock at town meetin', I presume! These Antiques and Horribles is just shameful: spoil my Fourth every season, livin' right near the road as we do.

*[Turning, catches sight of John.]*

Well, if there ain't—

MYRTLE

*[Carelessly.]*

Yes, I seen him before.

MRS. WHITE

*You seen him!* Well, *he* ain't got eyes for you nor me, seems.

*[Approaching John with conscious ceremony and her choicest intonation.]*

Good morning!

JOHN

*[Starting up.]*

Oh! Mrs.—Oh, good morning.

MRS. WHITE

Interruptin', be I?

JOHN

Not at all; I was just—How d' do, Myrtle.

MYRTLE

*[Smirking.]*

How d' do.—I seen you first.

MRS. WHITE

Readin' up a speech for town-hall meetin', I s' pose: somethin' in the patriotic?

JOHN

Why, no; I shan't speak this Fourth.

MRS. WHITE

Want t' know! More in the love line, mebbe.

*[Wrinkling a smile, and wagging her head toward Myrtle.]*

Oh, quite t' be expected!

*[John is helpless, and looks it.]*

Chores done up for the mornin'?

JOHN

Yes; I came this way to see Myrtle—

MRS. WHITE

Now, there! To help fill them lamps!

JOHN

Why,—I was waiting—

MRS. WHITE

So was we—for you. Wa'n't we, Myrtle?

MYRTLE

Yes, Ma.

MRS. WHITE

You by the hoss-trough—us in the house! Don't it beat all?

*[John stammers and stops.]*

Mother ailin' 's usual?

JOHN

Thanks; about the same.

MRS. WHITE

Yes, would be so. It 'll turn out to be dropsy, certain. I tell her, though, she lazes too much: needs a right smart girl round the house. Guess she 'll be more 'n glad o' mine; won't she, Myrtle?

MYRTLE

*[Sidling.]*

Ma!



MRS. WHITE

What I 'll do without her—well, I ain't sayin'. Mebbe I 'll stick right by her—and you, John. Nothin' just like a mother, let alone bein' a widder. Neither one don't al'ays last, but I guess I 'm warranted. 'Course, when yours *doos* go—well, come in, come right in, and you can help Myrtle fill them lamps. There 's one savin' grace in this keepin'-company: if it doos spend kerosene, nights, it spares trouble drawin' of it, mornin's.

JOHN

*[Following her, lugubrious.]*

Kerosene, yes.

MRS. WHITE

*[Sniggering amiably.]*

Then, too, courtin' wants a quiet corner to sprout, and there 's such a racket here in the road. Them mis'ble Canucks and millfolks, they 're 'nough to drive all decent livers from town. Land, here they come, the hull rum hullabaloo! *[Shrilly]* Come outn that dust, Myrtle, with your bran-best stockin's on!

MYRTLE

Ma, sakes!

*[She is hustled by Mrs. White up the flagstone, where they wait for John, who follows slowly, peering toward the little crowd, that enters noisily.]*

*First comes a troop of ragtag youngsters in regimentals, headed by a drum-major boy, officialized by a draggled rooster's plume sewed in a rimless straw hat. He beats time by twirling in his hand, and tossing in the air, a long*

tin horn, between the whirlings of which he toots, pirhouettes, and turns handsprings in the dust. His corps consists of three fifiers, a drummer, two clappers of bones and a milkpan-beater, attended by two bobtail bearers of the national colors. These pass to the watering place, where they stand in a group, and continue to play sundry patriotic airs vaguely recognizable as "Yankee Doodle," "Dixie," "America," etc. They are followed, straggling, by a rough, motley gang of young folk, male and female, aging from childhood to twenty odd—shouting, laughing and horn-tooting. These are all dressed in masquerade garb of many shapes, colors and inventions. The faces of some are painted, or smooched with charcoal; others wear masks, false noses and beards.

*In their midst, three figures—that enter toward the end of the rabble—are at once conspicuous; the old Minister—tugged, coat-tail and sleeve, by small Anticks and Horribles—marching, with uncovered head and saluting hat, by the side of a goat, astride of which rides a lithe ANTICK FIGURE, clad in an improvised Pierrot-like costume of bright blue, with cone-shaped hat of white paper, and pointed boots of scarlet. Wavy black hair, cut round, falls to the nape of the blue blouse. The goat, decked—horns and tail—with American streamers, marches haltingly, pushed and led by grinning attendants. On its head ox-eyed daisies make a crown, and about his legs and body—a black and yellow harness.*

*Reaching the centre of the scene, the beast balks utterly, standing with stiff legs planted, while the whole route pauses with good-natured jeers, and the drum-corps stops playing.*

*At this, the Antick rider, radiant with charming laughter, shakes aloft in one hand a cow-bell, and cries aloud, with a piquante tinge of French accent:]*

#### THE ANTICK

A drink! A drink for his Majesty!

[Winking at Jonas.]

—Ain't it?

## A HORRIBLE

Who?—old Stovepipe?

## ANOTHER

Nixy: the goat!

[Shouts of "Billy, Billy!" "Booze him at the trough!" "He's dry," etc.

By the roadside, John pushes back among the lilac bushes, where he stares, half-hidden, at the Antick. Only the minister, seeking with a quick glance, catches sight of him there.]

## JONAS

[Raising his voice.]

Boys and girls, hark to your Independence Bell!

[Shouts of "Hooray!" "Speech, speech!"]

[As Jonas speaks, they gather round him, near the trough, where numbers of them drink from the basin and the log-spout.]

Friends, Antiques and Horribles!—

[Shouts: "Hooray!"]

Lend me a drinking cup.

[A Voice: "Borrer your hat!" Jonas raises it in salutation.]

I hail your suggestion. In this ancient bumper I propose you a toast. This is our Glorious Fourth. We have gathered to celebrate it. King George the Third is dead. His ghost is forgotten. You never heard of him.

[Voices: "Ain't we, though!" "Ah, git out!" "What's he sayin'?"]

But King Joy o' the Fourth is alive. His spirit reigns.  
We all acclaim him.

[Shouts: "Hip, hip!"]

[The old man directs his voice, but not his eyes, toward the lilacs, where John is listening, his eyes unmoved from the Antick.]

Behold, his shrine is a clear spring by the way; his worship is a little pause in the heat; his pilgrims are passers in the dust; he is the Lord of Waysides, and brute and man are his brothers.

[Voices: "Give's a drink!" "Gee, it's hot!"]

Here, then, are come now, seeking His shrine, like kingfolks of old, these twain, man and beast—yea, for woman and man are one in his thirst—this Antick and this Goat. Lo, with this wine, I fill now a beaker of joy to them both:

[He dips his tall hat in the trough and raises it, filled with water.]

To Julie, Queen of July, and King William the Conqueror!

[Shouts of "Hooray!" "Julie!" "King Billy!" "Water him!" "Give it to the goat!"

Jonas—bowing across the brim to Julie—holds the hat with both hands under the goat's nose.]

JULIE

[Jumping off his back.]

Let me! I hold it for Billy, King.

[She takes the hat from Jonas, kisses the goat between the eyes, and pats him while he drinks.]

He is a beaut', my Billy.

## A CANUCK FELLOW

*[Putting one arm round her, laughing.]*

She is a beaut', my Julie!

*[Biting his arm, Julie flings the remaining hatful of water over him.]*

Ouch—the Devil!

*[He retreats, to the hoots of the crowd and a mock bow, with the hat, from Julie.]*

JULIE

The Devil—give him my love where you go to him.

*[She puts the hat on herself—and her own on Jonas—and loud laughter.]*

MRS. WHITE

*[By the gate, to Myrtle.]*

Scand'lous! Don't stand watchin'. Come in!

MYRTLE

*[Dallying.]*

Where 's John?

MRS. WHITE

Oh, he 'll foller. Come on—quick!

*[She pushes Myrtle ahead of her through the gate, which shuts as they disappear.]*

JONAS

*[To Julie, whom his great hat has swallowed.]*

Liege Lady, hide not such light under so damp'ning a bushel!

*[He removes the soaked hat, which she still holds with one hand.]*

JULIE

*[Coaxing for it with a smile.]*

I like you, old mister.

JONAS

*[Returning her smile—and his hat.]*

I obey you, young missus.

A SMALL-BOY ANTICK

*[Nudging her elbow.]*

I 'll frog-jump ye to the trough: will ye?

JULIE

*[Romping.]*

Me—first frog! Go it!

*[They leap-frog each other to the water trough.]*

A HORRIBLE

*[Shouting.]*

Say, there! Your cow 's jumped over the wall.

JONAS

*[Consternated.]*

Hey-diddle-diddle! Over the moon would be better.  
In to *her* mowing, Lord! The timothy! the timothy!

JULIE

The grass, is it? Who own the field?

JONAS

*[Forlornly.]*

Cassandra the Curst! I am a dead man. I shall go to heaven chasing that cow.

JULIE

*[Petting him.]*

Not you care now. We catch him for you.—Come on, boys, girls, catch the damn cow!

*[Shouts of "Catch her!" "Over the fence, boys!" etc.]*

THE DRUM MAJOR

Forward—march!

*[To drumming, horns and fife-squealing, the whole crowd, with unanimous yell, bolt off down the road, bearing the Minister with them. In the uproar, Billy the goat stands—a rooted derelict—left unregarded behind.]**As Julie passes the lilacs, John's hand—thrust out—catches her sleeve. She glances quickly, stops and stoops down, pretending to tie her boot.]*

JONAS

*[Calls from the hubbub.]*

Hallowa!—Hurt yourself?

JULIE

No, no!—the boot:—never matter. I wait here and mind Billy.

JONAS

*[His eye on the lilacs, waves the white hat.]*

Blessing on the both of ye!

[Hustled by the last of the rabble, he goes out.

The commotion still continues beyond view.

Through the picket gate, Mrs. White issues forth to fray, like a setting fowl from a coop beset by polecats. Her very skirt ruffles with ire, and her hair with haste. Brandishing a small kerosene-can, she flurries blindly past Julie and the goat, intent, panting, upon the game ahead.]

MRS. WHITE

That cow! My timothy-grass! You—you there! Skunks! Canucks! Trespassin'! Cows! Timothy! Canucks! —nucks!

[Windbroken, but still cackling, she vanishes beyond the maples.

Outside, gradually, the clamor dies away.

John comes out from the lilacs, approaches Julie, makes as if to speak, but stops, confused.

Julie does not notice him, but goes to the goat.]

JOHN

[With a gesture of appeal.]

Julie!

JULIE

[Fondling the animal.]

Yes, he is nice, pretty boy, my Billy.

JOHN

Was that—Pierre?

JULIE

And he have nice, pretty boy in the inside: yes!

JOHN

The one—you threw the water on him.



JULIE

And he never tell no lies, my nice Billy: no!

*[As she speaks, she hums snatches of a song in French\*].*

JOHN

I saw him: he tried to—Julie! You bit him, didn't you? Is *that* the fellow?

JULIE

*[Taking a comb from her blouse, begins to comb the goat's beard and flanks.]*

And he stick by his dear Julie, Queen, nights and days. And she pet him fine, and make the beard grand like the hotel boss, my nice Billy, King. So! So!

JOHN

You know, I only saw him that once. I thought may be—if that was really the one—I—I'm sorry.

JULIE

*[Humming more merrily, and arranging the ox-eyed daisies.]*

On the head, he have a crown—for the sun shade.

JOHN

I don't mean because you bit. I mean, of course—Julie!

JULIE

*[Tying a big bow-knot in each streamer.]*

On the horn, pretty bows, one, two—for the flies, Billy.

JOHN

I mean—myself: what I said that night. I thought

\*[See Note at end of volume.]

you were leaving me for him. But you didn't!—Julie, you didn't? Please tell me!

JULIE

[*Flashing.*]

Ha! And yet he is sorry!

[*With a shrug.*]

What *for*, Billy?

JOHN

Oh, I *was* fool-jealous, I guess. Of course, in my heart, I couldn't really believe you were living with him.

JULIE

[*With a wry face.*]

Bah! My Billy is more fine gentleman!

[*Then ingratiatingly to the goat.*]

One little drink—on Julie, yes?

[*With a curtsy.*]

Fine! Pleasure is to me.—At the bar?

[*Shaking her head.*]

*Pardon!* We serve only in the palm garden.—Yes, always the rules in summer.

[*She leads him to the trough.*]

Bordeaux, Monsieur?—No? Chianti?

[*She kisses him on the nose.*]

So!—Little water in the glass?

[*The goat drinks.*]

Elegant!

[*With another curtsy—her hand held slyly, as for a pretended tip.*]

*Merci, M'sieur!*

[*Having drunk, the goat is led to the settle.*]

Now—little lunch in the shade, yes?

[*She ties him where he may nibble a birch bough serenely.*]

Ring, when he want some thing!

[*She places the cow-bell on the settle, nearby.*]

Always service, night and day.—Yes, Julie Bonheur!

JOHN

[*Who has watched her, charmed.*]

Ah, yes! You *are* different, my Julie!

JULIE

[*Feigning to see him for the first time.*]

My, my, *my*?—Where, Mr. Hale. Where is *she*?

JOHN

Where—who?

JULIE

*That* Julie! My Julie—that's me: *yours*—I have not see her.

[*She turns away.*]

JOHN

[*Cast down.*]

You won't forgive me?

JULIE

Forgive? [*Shrugging.*] That's easy.

[*She extends her hand.*]

JOHN

[*Taking it passionately.*]

Thanks, thanks! You 're too good. But I'll make it up.

[*He tries to take more than the hand. She withdraws the hand.*]

JULIE

You make it up—too much.

JOHN

No, I swear. I 'm not fooling any more. I want to marry you—truly!

JULIE

On the Independence Day—marry? That is dull.

JOHN

Not to-day—very soon.

JULIE

Have you not notice— [*Smiling.*] —them?

[*She shows her wide blue pantaloons, with a flourish.*]

Ha, them is fine! To run in them—to dance—to jump! Ha!

[*She jumps lightly on the settle, and from the settle upon the broad rim of the trough.*]

Once the year I have legs!

*[She throws herself on the green banking above the trough,  
and sits dangling her scarlet boots.]*

I live in the clover. I am a grasshopper.

*[She chirps the French song again.]*

JOHN

*[Gazing up at her.]*

No: you 're a blue hummingbird.

JULIE

*[Thrusting out her pointed boots at him.]*

Red claws!

JOHN

I'll catch them in a net yet!

JULIE

*[Sticking out her tongue.]*

Sharp bill!—Bites!

JOHN

*[Climbing on the rim of the trough.]*

I 'll risk the bites.

JULIE

*[Tapping her round, bare head, shakes her short hair at him.]*

Little black head—know it all!

JOHN

What made you cut it off?

JULIE

This? To make me Pierrot! Long-hair Pierrette  
you not love no more.

JOHN

Ah, Julie, Julie dear! I love you—all my life!

JULIE

Ah, Johnny, Johnny dear! I love you—all last week!

JOHN

Let me sit by you—please!

JULIE

*[Curving her fingers to scratch.]*

No room to lie down. Stand up!

JOHN

You make me want to drown myself.

JULIE

The water is fine. Don't mind me.

JOHN

Let's make up!

JULIE

Sure!

JOHN

But you don't give me the chance!

JULIE

But you don't give me the drink!

JOHN

Some water?

*[Looking about.]*

There 's no dipper.

JULIE

O Billy, Billy, you hear it? No dipper! And he say I never give him the chance.

JOHN

By Jove!

*[Letting the water of the logspout run over his hands, he hollows them, held together, fills and reaches them to her with water.]*

Here 's the dipper. Will this do?—for a chance?

JULIE

*[Pouting, puts her mouth to his hand-bowl.]*

Oh, yes; I think—

*[She touches her lips to the water, and looks up sily.]*

—to begin!

*[With a delighted cry, he separates his hands to reach her, spilling the water. She draws back quickly.]*

Ah, now, the dipper! It is broke.

JOHN

I'll find you another one, to-night—in the sky. A silver one, that *never* breaks. We 'll drink out of that —together.

JULIE

Billy, Billy dear: the boots! He has them all wet!

JOHN

That 's too bad. Come: dry them in the sun.

*[He offers to lift her down.]*

JULIE

*[Warning him off.]*

Take care! You make it worse!

JOHN

*[Not to be warned, seizes her in his arms.]*

Juliette!

JULIE

*[Pulling his hair, escapes and jumps into the trough.]*

So, Mr. Johnny!

JOHN

Great Scott!

JULIE

What I tell you: you make it worse!

*[Kicking the water at him.]*

Keep 'way!

JOHN

I won't again. Come out. You mustn't do that.

JULIE

Well, somebody got to teach you how you drown yourself. That 's easy. Look: First thing, you sit down.

*[She looks tentatively at the water.]*

JOHN

Good Lord, no! You mustn't.

JULIE

*[Laughing.]*

No? You think I am scared?



JOHN

*[In consternation.]*

No, but really—don't! That 's the way to catch cold. Please come out. I won't touch you again, I swear.

JULIE

*[Looking at him dubious, as at a naughty child.]*

Swear some more.

JOHN

*[Very earnest.]*

I promise I won't.

JULIE

No, no; swear good!

JOHN

Damn it if I will: There!

JULIE

*[In feigned disappointment.]*

Eh, eh?—You are damn if you will swear good?

JOHN

No, I'll be damned if I let you catch cold. Come out!

JULIE

*[Stepping out on the stone rim.]*

That 's pretty good.

*[She jumps down in the road.]*

JOHN

In the dust! What are you thinking of? Now they're all mud.

JULIE

*[Ruefully, viewing her boots.]*

Ah, Billy, more worse and worse!

JOHN

If you had let me—

JULIE

*[With a gay thought, running to Billy.]*Never matter, Billy. I tell you: We give them 'way,  
for nice present, Independence Day—*[She sits on the settle and takes off her boots. She wears  
no stockings.]*

—for surprise the grand ladies! This one—

*[Here she flings one boot, which strikes the picket gate.]*

—for the Madame. This one—

*[She looks up archly at John.]*

—for the mam'selle!

*[The second boot lands on the flagstones.]*

JOHN

*[Catching her spirit of mischief.]*

You 're a nice little devil!—But I love you for that!

JULIE

O Billy, the compliment! I must return him. So!

*[Drying her feet on the goat's flanks.]*You are nice little—bath-towel. But I love you for  
that!*[She hugs the goat round the neck.]*

JOHN

*[Following suit, after her.]*

Well, Billy, since I have sworn to the girl—you've got to be the goat.

*[Caressing the animal, while Julie dries her feet, and turns up the bottom of the wet pantaloons.]*

Ah, Billy dear, I love you. You are ten thousand years old, and I have loved you—long before I was born! I know what you are, King Billy! Just now you're only a pretender. You love me, too, though you do mock me with that old, old face of yours. You pretend to be just an animal, a village Antick, like the others. But I know who owns you, and since I have drunk the wine of this wayside—out of the trough, Billy—I know that you used to stand on your hind legs, on the grass in Arcadia, and play on a water reed, with laurels on your horns, and hyacinths on your head—no ox-eyed daisies there, Billy—and you and I and another used to dance to the piping of our great horned Master, in the shade, by a wayside of Arcady.

JULIE

Yes, yes, to dance—with feet bare!

*[Skipping about on the grass fringe.]*

Where is that—Arcady? Is it far?

JOHN

Not to-day, my kiddie; to-day it's close by. It 's over there, where you're skipping; its here, by Billy, the god of green things;

[*Taking his book from a pocket.*]

and its here—in dreams;

[*Pointing upward.*]

and its there in the gold green above us, with the old, old sun-god of Greece.

JULIE

Ha, Greece: I know that country. Tony, what black the boots, he come from there.

JOHN

And Julie, that throws the boots; and John, the Canuck!

JULIE

[*In surprise.*]

John Canuck—I dunno him.

JOHN

[*Going close to her.*]

Johnny?

JULIE

[*Looking in his eyes affectionately.*]

Oh,—Johnny!—Canuck?

JOHN

[*Yearningly.*]

Mustn't I be—what *you* are?

JULIE

[*Softening still more.*]

I like it: Canuck!

JOHN

Can't I kiss? One won't count!

JULIE

Ah, but you swear!—Wait: Can you kiss—Canuck?

JOHN

I could learn!

JULIE

*[Her face towards his.]*

Hands back! Cross behind!

JOHN

*[Following her action.]*

Hands crossed behind!

*[Julie smiles at him with ardent tenderness, and nods.**With hands crossed behind their backs, they lean to each other and kiss on the lips.**Through the gate, Myrtle comes down the flagstones.**Seeing them, she stops suddenly, and stares.**Having kissed, Julie sees Myrtle, but John—with his back toward Myrtle—sees nothing but Julie, to whom he speaks coaxingly.]*

I'm just beginning to learn!

JULIE

*[Laughing at Myrtle, who gasps.]*

One teacher at the time!

*[John turns and sees Myrtle, who pretends, in confusion, not to have seen them; stoops, and picks up the scarlet boot beside her.]*

JOHN

Good Lord!

MYRTLE

*[Examining the boot gingerly, speaks to John.]*

How d'do! Have you dropped something?

JULIE

*[Covering John's speechlessness.]*

Look like you have drop some thing, Johnny.

*[With a curtsy to Myrtle.]*

The one what the shoe fit—she is the princéss.

MYRTLE

*[Smirking.]*

Oh!

*[Then bridling.]*

You needn't never trouble to fill them lamps, Mister Hale!

*[Still retaining the boot, she disappears through the gate. Outside, the fife and drumming begin again.]*

JULIE

You sure drop some thing *hard*—that time, Johnny.

JOHN

*[Breathing deep.]*

Is she gone—really?

JULIE

*[Archly pensive.]*

I wonder!—You know what the priest call the good conscience?

U O P M

JOHN

The priest? [*Ardently.*] Julie!

JULIE

My God, yes! I have the good conscience—that time! [*With mystery.*] —Fine! Now I tell the bad secret.

JOHN

Secret? What about?

JULIE

[*Tapping her breast.*]

Julie Bonheur! Ssh! She have a sister, what marry a Canuck, what his name is—Ssh!

JOHN

What?

JULIE

[*Darkly.*]

Is—Pierre!

JOHN

He! —The fellow that I—your sister's husband!

JULIE

Abominable! Julie live in the house of her brother-in-law!

[*She bursts into laughter.*]

JOHN

And I imagined—Bah! Don't torment me.

[*Untying the goat.*]

Come, Billy.

[*To Julie.*]

Quick: let's go to the priest.

M. T. U.

JULIE

What for—the priest?

JOHN

*[Points to the gate.]*

She may come back. Let 's get married.

JULIE

*[Appalled.]*

Us—the banns! Have you not kiss me—Canuck?

JOHN

*[Puzzled.]*

Why, yes, I forgot: but is that—?

JULIE

*[With coming tears.]*Billy, you see it: so soon he *forgot!* And he talk of the banns!

JOHN

Julie, you know I love you always—forever!

JULIE

*[Outraged.]*Billy, you hear it? These Yankees they say only that: *I love you always, forever!* Why not they say: *I love you—all this week!?*

JOHN

*[With emotion.]*

Don't call me that: Yankee.

JULIE

*[Dismissing the gathered storm with a smile.]*



All right: you call me *Yankee*, I call you *Canuck*.

[*Imitating his voice and struggling with her accent.*]

John, I love you always—forever!

JOHN

Amen!

JULIE

[*Laughing affectionately in his face.*]

Bah! Old John Amen!

JOHN

Now, quick! The whole gang 's coming back. Get on Billy, and we'll go get married.

JULIE

Go on Billy—sure! Go marry—nix!

JOHN

Nonsense! You know better.

JULIE

How can I know better before I try? How can I try, before I know better?

[*Imitating him.*]

—Nonsense!

JOHN

Don't we love each other?

JULIE

On the Independence Day—

[*Patting him lovingly like the goat.*]

—Ha, he is *Johnny*! On the Christmas Day?—Ayho!  
Perhaps he be *John*!

JOHN

[*Half angry.*]

Don't talk like that.

JULIE

[*Stroking his head.*]

No, sure! We stop talking. We stick to the job,  
and talk about the strikes—next Christmas.

[*Laughing.*]

May be I pay you good wages!

JOHN

[*Gasping.*]

'And aren't we ever to be married?

JULIE

[*Shrugging.*]

The new moon grow in the night! When Billy dear  
he have the kiddies, he stay at home, tied up. Stop the  
talking. Here they come all with the cow. Get on!

JOHN

[*In response to her gesture.*]

On Billy?

JULIE

What—you call him?—god of the green things!

JOHN

[*Mounting behind her.*]

All right, my Julie: We 'll keep green!

*[The clamor of the Horribles outside bursts louder. Preceding them, at shouting distance, with head craned backward, Mrs. White enters, perspiring. Straddling the goat—John touching his feet alternately to the ground—the two lovers move toward her.]*

MRS. WHITE

*[Shouting back.]*

Yes, Min'ster Boutwell, you just shet the beast in your own barn, and pray by her : hundred dollars wuth, Jonas! Timothy 's high feedin' for cows!

*[Turning, she confronts the beridden goat.]*

Well, if here aint the Antique: male *and* female!—My God, *him*—John!

JOHN

*[Politely.]*

Did you catch the cow, Mrs. White?

MRS. WHITE

*[Staring aghast, bolts past the goat for the gate.]*

No, land! It aint human!

JULIE

*[Calls after her.]*

Please!—We drop some thing.

*[Mrs. White, who has reached the other red boot, pauses and looks from that to the couple. Julie nods graciously.]*

Yes, thank you.

*[Mrs. White picks it up.]*

Please, will Madame throw it after us—the old shoe!

*[She bursts into merry peals, answered by hilarious laughter from the rabble outside, whose entrance with fife and drum is imminent.]*

MRS. WHITE

Well, if that don't beat the Lord!—

*[Flinging the shoe at them.]*

And good riddance!

*[Standing in the road, she glowers toward the arch of the maples, where John and Julie, urging forward the bestraddled goat, are greeted by the joyous cheers of the Anticks and Horribles.]*

**CURTAIN.**



# **THE CAT-BOAT**

**A Fantasy for Music**

## CHARACTERS

---

NICO.

HIS MOTHER.

A SKIPPER.

NEREIDA.

---

TIME: To-day.

PLACE: *Mt. Desert, Maine.*

## THE CAT-BOAT\*

*The scene is a small work-shop. Occupying the larger part of it, stands a partly completed sail-boat, jacked up on wooden horses. An old spar, placed in it tentatively as a mast, is wedged at the top against the ceiling—evidently a temporary makeshift, as a proportionate mast would tower four times the height of the room. The floor of the room is littered with ends of boards and beams. Sawdust and shavings are piled high about the boat's keel. On its bow the word "NEREIDA" has been blocked in, with green lettering.*

*Along the left wall, a work-bench in confusion. Jumbled among the tools are several books, in one of which a chisel is laid, to keep the open page. At back, left, a large door; at back, centre, a small-paned window, half-open. Through these are glimpses of a sea-scape toward sunset: fishing-skiffs aground on a low-tide beach.*

*On the near side of the boat, Nico—a robust, Portuguese type of boy in his teens—is stretched along the deck. His face is partly hidden in his bent right-arm and deep-black locks; his left arm hangs over the boat's side, swinging from the half-relaxed hand a hammer, with slow, pendulum motion. Faintly, yet with a sense of nearness, rises the singing of a girl's voice.*

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## THE VOICE

I lay in the heart of a wave  
In the burning west;  
The Lord of Evening flamed  
His royalest;  
And gorgeous mists went by  
Like guest on guest  
Over a palace floor,  
All richly dresst.

*[Nico rises and leans on his right arm, staring upon the shavings.]*

Out of the crimson came  
A ship of gray;  
I watched her silver prow  
Flash far away;  
She flew like a shining hawk  
That seeks her prey,  
And round her bosom sprang  
The dazzling spray.

*[In the doorway appears the SKIPPER. Nico relaxes again to his first attitude, recommencing the pendulum motion of the hammer.]*

Amid her sails I saw  
The pied mists hover,  
Like butterflies that float  
Among white clover,  
And a fair boy his arm  
Was dangling over;  
I seized his hand and kissed  
And called him lover!

[*The Skipper, carrying a bucket, comes into the shop, pauses, eyes the oblivious boy, adjusts a plug of tobacco, and spits. Nico leaps to his feet and stands upright on the deck.*]

## THE SKIPPER

'Ev'nin', Nick.

[*Half frightened, half fascinated, the boy gazes at the Skipper, as if trying to focus his wits on an apparition.*]

'Sleep again?

[*Nico, still half fearful, begins to hammer rapidly.*]

'Sleep again, I asked ye?

## NICO

No, Cap'n.

## THE SKIPPER

Oh!

[*Setting down his bucket, he draws out a stool and prepares a plug of tobacco.*]

Hammered that same peg twenty-'leven, times, ain't ye?—Bust it, won't ye?

## NICO

I beg pardon.

## THE SKIPPER

Oh!

[*Nico recommences feverishly.*]

Quit, can ye?

[*Tapping his forehead.*]

I've got some idees on to boil, and I want quiet to cook 'em.

[*Picking up the open-book from the work-bench.*]

Principles of navigation?

NICO

*[Trying to secure it courteously but with haste.]*

It 's mine.

THE SKIPPER

Hold on. *[Reads.]* —“The Odyssey.” Hm! What truck’s that?—Up-to-date?

NICO

*[Having secured it.]*

I think so.

*[He secretes it under some shavings.]*

THE SKIPPER

*[Points to his bucket.]*See *them*?

NICO

Blue fish. Fine ones!

THE SKIPPER

How long since *you* caught some?

NICO

I don’t know, Cap’n. Six weeks, I guess.

THE SKIPPER

Six *monihs*, damn it!—Them’s for your mother.

NICO

*[Brightening.]*

For mother!

THE SKIPPER

I seen her scrapin’ round at low-tide for clams. **All**

she got was barnacles. I seen her cook 'em; yes, sir, and eat on 'em. You're a pretty brat—you!

NICO

She'll be glad of these. You're very kind.

THE SKIPPER

Oh, I'm a philanthropist—me! That's the fifth mess I've caught for her in a fortnight. I fished 'em into my boat, the Betsy. Say! How's trade with you, Nicky? How many saw-dust herrin' have ye hauled into your beauty here—what ye call her?

NICO

[*Low.*]

*Nereida.*

THE SKIPPER

One of your dad's fancy-article names, what? He were a school-master in Massachusetts, what?

NICO

Yes, Cap'n.

THE SKIPPER

[*Mutters, reminiscent.*]

Come up here to Mt. Desert for the holidays and fell to courtin' a Portugee girl. Married her, too, took to fishin' and got drowned. Folks say you take after him, what?

NICO

They say so.

THE SKIPPER

Then why in God's fish-hook don't ye clear away off

down to Massachusetts and take to the school-mister business like him? Why don't ye quit this makin'-out ye're a shipwright, and support your poor, old ailin' mother, what ain't even got food and gear for herself, by God!

NICO

[*Ardently.*]

My mother shall have all her heart desires. I 've promised her. You shall see, Cap'n; you shall see, when I finish *Nereida*.

THE SKIPPER

*When ye finish Nereida!* That's prime. Did ye ever *finish anythin'* yet ye started out to?

[*Points to the boat.*]

Look at her there. She were begun a year ago; three months ago she were precisely the same stage o' growth as she sets there now. What ye got that stick stuck up for a mast for?

NICO

[*Embarrassed.*]

That's only—that's just to sail her with, sometimes.

THE SKIPPER

Sail her, eh? Where away? Into the fireplace and up the chimney? And what ye keep your shop messed up with these here shavin's and truck for?

NICO

[*Reservedly.*]

The shavings—you don't understand, Cap'n.

## THE SKIPPER

Oh, I don't, mebbe. Wall, I understand this, young man: you *play*! You play like a kid when y' ought to be workin' like a man. How darest ye raise the cheek to build ye a sailin' boat anyhow?

## NICO

I 've watched the boats sail, always.

## THE SKIPPER

See-a-boat sails a boat. Lookin' 's doin'. That your point?

## NICO

I 've longed always to build one myself.

## THE SKIPPER

Long-for-a-cat-boat builds ye a cat-boat; long-for-the-White-House gets ye the White House; long-for-the-full-moon gets ye the full moon!—That your point?

## NICO

[*Puzzled.*]

Perhaps you don't understand, Cap'n. When the breeze is stiff, a sail-boat is wonderful. She's like an aquatic bird; the green water bubbles round her breast; then she's just about to dive. The blue sky spreads under her wings; then she's just going to fly.

## THE SKIPPER

[*Peering, keenly.*]

But *doos* she?

NICO

[*Oblivious.*]

Then she rounds a rocky headland ; you can't see her slim body for the hemlocks ; but right against the mountains you see her bright stretched wings floating inland silently to her nest.

THE SKIPPER

[*Scratching his chin.*]

Why, Nick, my lad, then that settles me in my mind. I ain't much ; you beat me ; I own up : there's more fish in the sea than ever I caught, and that's all. But jest one thing ; jest one thing, I ask ye, my lad.—You love your mother ?

NICO

You know it—how much.

THE SKIPPER

Do I? P'raps mebbe.

NICO

[*Simply.*]

I would die for her.

THE SKIPPER

Jest this, then: if ye love your mother, finish that boat ; don't let your Ma die, but *finish that boat* ; and when you've got her done—I'll pay ye two hundred dollars for her.

NICO

Cap'n! Two hundred dollars!

[*Seizing the Skipper's hand, he kisses it.*]

—Cap'n!

THE SKIPPER

[*Drawing his hand away.*]

Say, come!—You promise to finish her?

NICO

I promise! I can do it easily by this day week. O Mammy! dear, poor Mammy! You'll be a queen then!

THE SKIPPER

Gettin' late; better come along and fetch them fish home t' her.

NICO

No, no! You take them; please! I'm going to get right to work. I'll come later.

THE SKIPPER

Wall!—Good night.

[*Takes up the bucket.*]

By the by,—*finish that boat!*

[*He goes out.*]

NICO

[*Calls after him.*]

I've promised, Cap'n. Tell Mammy to come and see me at work.

[*Joyously.*]

Two hundred dollars!

[*Seizing up his hammer, he springs to the boat and strikes a single blow. A chorus of girlish voices fills the room.*]



*Nico pauses an instant, then pounds faster, striving to drown them. Finally, as they sing on, he drops his hammer, and holds his hands over his ears.]*

## THE VOICES

Follow up! follow up!—follow after!  
To the shores that are sweet with our laughter,  
Where the silvery petrel claps his wings  
And the cliffs are hoarse with our halloosings.

## NICO

O God!

## THE VOICES

Follow on! follow on!—follow fleetier!  
To the reefs where our chorus grows sweeter,  
Where we chase and race our white-maned fillies  
That trample the blue-green ocean-lilies.

## NICO

[Crying out.]

Stop!

## THE VOICES

Follow down! follow down!—follow faster!  
To the beautiful deeps of disaster,  
Where we clash and dash our foaming chalices  
In the roaring courts of our silent palaces.

## NICO

I *will* not hear!

*[Passionately he recommences his hammering and, to drown their song, sings to the cadence of his blows.]*

Who shall be served?—The Lord He said!—  
From Kennebunkport to Californee?  
Who gave me birth? Who gives me bread?  
*Hep! March!*  
'Tis my own Countree.

NEREIDA'S VOICE

[*As in pain.*]

Nico!—Nico!

NICO

[*Hammers and sings.*]

Proudly her liegemen sons she led  
*From Kennebunkport to Californee,*  
And freedom sang above the tread  
*Hep! March!*  
Of my own Countree.

NEREIDA'S VOICE

Nico, pity! You bruise my side.

NICO

[*Hammers and sings.*]

She has set her stars to watch her dead  
*From Kennebunkport to Californee:*  
For she's sung 'em to sleep with the singing lead,  
*Hep! March!*  
**Has** my own Countree.

NEREIDA'S VOICE

You wound my breast.

NICO

[*Hammers and sings.*]

Good-bye to weanling! Good-bye to wed!  
*From Kennebunkport to Califormee:*  
I am gone with the rest for to make my bed  
*Hep! March!*  
With my own Countree.

NEREIDA'S VOICE

You break my heart.

NICO

*[Ceasing.]*

Nereida! Nereida!

NEREIDA'S VOICE

*[Still as in pain.]*

No more!

NICO

What have I done? Forgive me!

NEREIDA'S VOICE

Nico!

NICO

*[Laying his head against the prow of the boat.]*

Come to me!

NEREIDA'S VOICE

Are you true?

NICO

Come to me!

NEREIDA'S VOICE

Will you not beat my bosom with your steel?

NICO

*[Flinging his hammer to the farthest corner of the shop.]*

Come to me!

NEREIDA'S VOICE

Fine, Nico!

*[From the prow of the boat, where the shavings are piled highest, NEREIDA emerges—head and shoulders and breast above the deck, where a shaft of the sunset through the window falls upon her. Like the golden, curling shavings are the long ringlets of her hair, and through the sweet-scented pile about her shoulders she reaches her arms to Nico.]*

NICO

At last!

*[He embraces her, and playfully she half smothers his face in the shavings.]*

NEREIDA

Cruel Nico! feel here at my side where your cold hammer bruised me. Kiss here my throat, where the hard steel wounded. Are not you ashamed, naughty Nico?

NICO

*[Kissing her.]*

I am happy and sad. Let me forget.

NEREIDA

Is it not enough that you have my soul? Must you make for me a shell to creep into, to pine in and be tossed in—a toy for my own mermaids—till at last, flung upon the storm beach, I scorch and wither there?

NICO

Let me forget, Nereida.

NEREIDA

And when you have nailed me fast in my sea-sarcophagus, will you paint neatly on my tomb *NEREIDA*—

[*Points to the lettering.*]

like that—and praise me among the skippers in the dockyard, and say: “Look at her there! Isn’t she perfect? Show me a cutter or brig like *Nereida*!”

NICO

Your hammer is harder than mine. Spare me!

NEREIDA

What, my Nico! Did you spare me? This work of your hammer and saw—what will it avail you when all is shipshape and perfect? Will it be I?

NICO

No, no!

NEREIDA

What, then, am I to you, Nico?

NICO

Nereida, you are all—all that the heart in my hammer yearns toward.

NEREIDA

All rather that your thick-headed hammer would destroy! I am your full-rigged frigate under sail, your wide-winged racer flying, your sloop moored in

the moonlight, your skiff, skimming the breezy silver of the dawn. I am the awful flashing of your thousand triremes, and I am the white-winged peace of all your argosies. Yet you—O Nico! O excellent master architect! What thing is this which your art has labeled *Nereida*? What ultimate fulfilment of our love?—A skipper's cat-boat, for sale for two hundred dollars!

NICO

No, no! I will build you the triremes, the argosies—a thousand fleets. Only first I will complete—just a cat-boat.

NEREIDA

*Complete? What would you complete?—The stars? The dance of the worlds? The song of the angels? What would you complete, my Nico?—A coffin for your beloved?*

NICO

[*Pained.*]

Nereida! But I have promised!

[*With a cry, Nereida disappears within the prow.*]

Nereida, come back!

[*In desperation, Nico grasps vainly among the shavings, kisses the wood, touches the boat caressingly.*]

Come back, Nereida! Only hear me. She is old—dear, poor Mammy! She is ill; she starves. She has none but me: I have given the Skipper my word. If I break it, she will die. Only hear me, Nereida! She is old; she is ill; she will die!

## NEREIDA'S VOICE

[Sings.]

Behind the larch my sail is set  
By the dusk-green cedar's pile,  
Where the brine is on the violet,  
And the balsam's dipping bough is wet  
By the long and the blue and the bright inlet  
That clasps the heart of the isle.

NICO

[Sinking down.]

She is old; she is ill; she will die!

## NEREIDA'S VOICE

[Sings.]

Lay your head in the lap of me  
And good-bye to the shore!  
Leave laurel and lark and swarded lea,  
Leave homing swallow and hiving bee,  
And lie with me and the infinite sea,  
Forever and evermore!

NICO

Nereida, come back! I will never lift my hammer  
again!

NEREIDA

[Her wan-bright locks rising through a pile of loose shavings  
in the sun's slant beam.]

Swear it, Nico!

NICO

*[Springing towards her.]*

I swear it!

NEREIDA

*[Disappears from the shavings and rises again, waist-high, from the boat—this time beside the rudder.]*

Fine Nico! Kiss me and forget!

NICO

Nereida!

*[Passionately he goes to her and kisses her; then leaps joyously upon the deck, runs to the edge and winds an imaginary cable.]*

Heave anchor! Off shore! Let her free!

NEREIDA

The wind 's sou'west; pile the white-caps, Nico.

NICO

*[Springs down, gathers up armfuls of shavings and sawdust and heaps them higher about the bow of the boat.]*

Loose the port halyards, Nereida. Let the boom swing.

NEREIDA

*[As she loosens invisible ropes.]*

Pile higher.

NICO

*[Running with a fresh armful.]*

How's this for a sea!



NEREIDA

Aboard! aboard! She's off.

NICO

*[Bounds upon the deck.]*

Hurrah! She leaps like a colt with foam on her bit. Aha! feel her flanks tingle; it's her racing blood! —Port! port! taut her mains'l.

NEREIDA

Look away to the sky-line, Nico!—The wide, bright world!

NICO

*[In the prow.]*

White and blue, white and blue, on and forever! Watch how her bowsprit dips and the big wave boils round her. Haha! did you catch that spray in the eyes? I'll be Columbus, Nereida; and you shall be the crew and mutiny.—Or why not Magellan? To circle first around our star. Or Darwin? To watch the man-beasts crawl on Tierra del Fuegos. Or Perry off Japan! At sunrise, to see the bronze diver fetch up his pearl to the foam, in the blue shadow of Fujiyama! Or some old Phoenecian captain, creeping—aghast and alone—westward between the pillars of Hercules! Which of all shall we be, Nereida? We are free: Say—where shall we steer?

NEREIDA

*[Lifting the book from the shavings, where Nico concealed it from the Skipper.]*

Shall I choose?

NICO

Choose, you!

NEREIDA

Take me home, then, Nico: mine is the olden time.

*[Handing him the book.]*

Here is our chart-book; by this we will steer. Look away there to starboard!—

The reef and the breakers: beyond them the long blue hill slopes inland upward into the isle of Aea.

NICO

*[Sinks down, laying the book on the deck and covering his face with his hands.]*

The isle of Circe!

NEREIDA

Hark! Do you hear them, Odysseus? The roar of the waves is loud, but their voices are heard in your heart. Are they wolves? Are they swine? Hark again!

NICO

My men! my men!—Their hoofs are tearing the turf by the palace-door; their snouts are nozzling the poppies by the fountain. Let me up from our couch, let me go to them—Circe! enchantress!

NEREIDA

*[Drawing him close with one arm, with the hand of the other places upon his hair a garland, which she has been twisting of the shavings.]*

My lord and hero dreams—See! I have woven him a chaplet of the poppies.

NICO

[*Lying beside Nereida on the deck—the book near them.*]

Kiss me again!

NEREIDA

[*Ever visible only to the waist, bends sinuously forward along the boat's side, and letting her long locks fall among the waves of the shavings, scoops up a handful of sawdust, which through her two small fists she lets glide, backward and forward, as through an hour-glass.*]

Look, dreamer of gods! These are the golden sands of Circe's isle. Behold how swiftly they mete the life-time of dreams!

NICO

How beautiful—the sands of Circe's isle!

NEREIDA

And feel—how heavy.

NICO

Gold—solid gold!

NEREIDA

[*Letting fall the last.*]

And glisten so fine.—Ah! my hero, love me longer.  
The sands are black in Ithaca, your home.

NICO

Home!—home!

NEREIDA

The seas are terrible between Ithaca and here.

NICO

Goodbye—for home. She is waiting—she prays for me!

NEREIDA

Beyond my isle lies destruction; the shadows of hell are there. Scylla devours her living and Charybdis sucks down her dead. Do not leave me, my hero!

NICO

Heave off! my men. Set her sails.

NEREIDA

The Sirens sing their song from the meadow of skulls and flowers. The crew's ears must be stopped with wax; if they hear, they are lost. But *you* I will lash in the masthead, and you shall listen.

*[Where he stands against the mast, she begins to tie him to it with strands of the shavings, which she twists and knots together. He helps her.]*

NICO

The Sirens' voices—are they as sweet as yours?

NEREIDA

Even as mine.

NICO

O bind me, then, with the chains of Prometheus.

NEREIDA

These thongs are mightier than his. So!—now you are bound. Set sail! Scylla and Charybdis are looming ahead. Farewell, my Odysseus!

NICO

Circe, farewell!

NEREIDA

Farewell!

*[Sliding amid the shavings where they are piled highest, she glides overboard and is gone. The work-shop has become twilight; Nico stands tied to the mast, motionless, except for his head, which turns, or is thrust forward, listening, as his eyes seem to descry the things of his imagination.]*

NICO

Where are we drifting, my men? The night comes down.

Where are we drifting? Their ears are filled with wax: they cannot hear.

*[Out of the dusk comes a music of rushing waters, and female voices are heard singing:]*

THE VOICES

Stay! stay!  
Stay thy wing'd barque,  
King of Achæans!  
Hark—hark  
The Sirens' story  
Of heroes castaway:  
The Argives' glory,  
Their victories and pæans!

NICO

I hear you, Sirens.

THE VOICES

Troy-land! Troy-land!  
Her orient halls!

Troy-land! Troy-land!  
Her cloud-capp'd, kindling walls!

NICO

The roaring waters hear you. Sing on!

THE VOICES

Who guessed the might of them,  
The gladness, the glow?  
Drunk at the sight of them,  
Who dreamed of the woe?

NICO

Ah, me!

THE VOICES

Not they, the Achæans!  
Hearken their pæans:  
Sisters, we know!  
Sing them again—  
The songs of the silent dead men—  
Sing them low.

NICO

Sing always!

THE VOICES

Odysseus!  
Come hither and rest.

NICO

I am coming!

THE VOICES

Odysseus!  
Thou only shalt hear:

NICO

I am yours!

THE VOICES

The beauty, the joy and the martyrdom,  
The knowledge, the fear,  
And the woe that were and will come—  
To thee alone  
Shall be known.

NICO

Let me free! Loose me, my men!

THE VOICES

To the dreadful, the dear,  
O draw near!  
Our breasts to thy breast  
And the heart of the god beating under!  
From our lips the rest—  
Troy-land! Troy-land!  
And all the wonder!

*[In the doorway appears an old and haggard WOMAN, ill-clad and feeble. She carries a lighted lantern, and peers in.]*

NICO

*[Struggling.]*

Loose me!—They do not hear.—Let me free! Let me free!—Dear goddess of Love, let me free!

THE OLD WOMAN

*[Feebly hastens toward him.]*

Nico! Little Nico! what ails ye?

NICO

At last! She 's come!—Let me free!

THE OLD WOMAN

*[Climbing from a stool upon the boat.]*

My boy, what 's happed ye? Who's tied ye here?

*[Loosens him.]*

Why, it's only shavin's that bind ye!

*[Retreating before his passionate gesture, to the floor.]*

Stop! stop, Nico! Why do ye stare so? Stand away, boy! Don't ye know me?

NICO

*[Following her wildly with outstretched arms, falls at her feet and embraces her knees.]*

You are the Queen of the Sirens! I love you!

THE OLD WOMAN

Nico! Don't ye know your own Mammy?

NICO

*[Springing to his feet, staggers back, staring, then seizing up the lantern, brings it close to the old woman's face, scanning it terribly.]*

Mother!

*[He drops the lantern, which goes out, leaving the shop in vague twilight.]*

No, no! She 's false! She has betrayed me.

*[Flinging himself beside the boat.]*

Nereida! Come back to me, Nereida!



## THE OLD WOMAN

Little Nico!

*[She gropes toward him.]*

NICO

She 's gone; she 's false. Nereida! Come to me,  
Nereida!

THE OLD WOMAN

*[Appalled.]*

What's that in your hand? Stop! What 'll ye  
do? How will we live, boy, if ye do it?

NICO

Nereida! for the last time, answer me! Come back  
to me!

THE OLD WOMAN

Put it down, Nico!

*[Kneeling.]*

God, take the axe from him and save us!

NICO

She doesn't answer. See then, Nereida! I am  
coming to you. I will find you and *make* you mine.

*[There resounds the crash of a falling mast; and the dimly-  
seen form of Nico, heavily swinging an axe, is heard  
hacking and smashing the hull of the ship to pieces.]*

Are you here? Are you hiding deeper?

THE OLD WOMAN

*[Still kneeling.]*

Lord, save little Nico!

NICO

*[Calling amid his blows.]*

Nereida! Nereida! Nereida! Nereida!

*[Among the heaped litter of broken boards, shavings and sawdust, he sinks down exhausted. As the old woman is trying tremulously to re-light the lantern, the head and bust of Nereida rise through a pile of sawdust beside Nico, irradiated by a dim rainbow-light from below.]*

NEREIDA

Did you call me, Nico? Don't you know me?

NICO

*[Faintly, trying to rise.]*

Beautiful and terrible, what are you?

NEREIDA

I am the naiad of the uncompleted—the Circe of dreams. I am the beauty of wreck, the aurora of despair. You will build again and again, and I will come and abide in your masterwork, till the work shall crumble. You will love me and hate me again, but you shall not elude me. Till by and by, Nico mine, in the endless rebuilding of life, you shall take me to your heart and love me, and make me your mistress forever.

NICO

*[Reaching to embrace her.]*

My beloved!

*[She sinks into the sawdust and disappears.]*

## THE OLD WOMAN

*[Comes wistfully over to him with the lantern.]*

What's that ye're starin' on, little Nico? What's that ye're takin' to your heart?

## NICO

*[Groping with his arms amid the pile, then strewing it over his bowed head and shoulders.]*

Sawdust, Mammy!—sawdust!

**CURTAIN.**

1

# **SAM AVERAGE**

**A Silhouette**

## CHARACTERS

---

ANDREW.

JOEL

ELLEN.

SAM AVERAGE.

---

*An intrenchment in Canada, near Niagara Falls, in the year  
1814. Night, shortly before dawn.*

## SAM AVERAGE\*

*On the right, the dull glow of a smouldering wood-fire ruddies the earthen embankment, the low-stretched outline of which forms, with darkness, the scenic background.*

*Near the centre, left, against the dark, a flag with stars floats from its standard.*

*Beside the fire, ANDREW, reclined, gazes at a small frame in his hand; near him is a knapsack, with contents emptied beside it.*

*On the embankment, JOEL, with a gun, paces back and forth, a blanket thrown about his shoulders.*

JOEL

*[With a singing call.]*

Four o'clock!—All 's well!

*[Jumping down from the embankment, he approaches the fire.]*

ANDREW

By God, Joel, it 's bitter.

JOEL

*[Rubbing his hands over the coals.]*

A mite sharpish.

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ANDREW

*[Looks up eagerly.]*

What?

JOEL

Cuts sharp, for Thanksgivin'.

ANDREW

*[Sinks back, gloomily.]*

Oh!

*[A Pause.]*

I wondered you should agree with me. You meant  
the weather. I meant—

*[A pause again.]*

JOEL

Well, Andy: what 'd you mean?

ANDREW

Life.

JOEL

Shucks!

ANDREW

*[To himself.]*

Living!

JOEL

*[Sauntering over left, listens.]*

Hear a rooster crow?

M HOLL

ANDREW

No. What are you doing?

JOEL

Tiltin' the flag over crooked in the dirt. That 's our signal.

ANDREW

Nothing could be more appropriate, unless we buried it—buried it in the dirt!

JOEL

She 's to find us where the flag 's turned down. I fixed that with the sergeant all right. The rooster crowin' 's *her* watch-word for us.

ANDREW

An eagle screaming, Joel: that would have been better. [*Rising.*—Ah!

[*He laughs painfully.*]

JOEL

Hush up, Andy! The nearest men ain't two rods away. You 'll wake 'em. Pitch it low.

ANDREW

Don't be alarmed. I 'm coward enough.



JOEL

'Course, though, there ain't much danger. I 'm sentinel this end, and the sergeant has the tip at t'other. Besides, you may call it the reg'lar thing. There 's been two thousand deserters already in this tuppenny-ha'penny war, and none on 'em the worse off. When a man don't get his pay for nine months—well, he ups and takes his vacation: why not? When Nell joins us, we 'll hike up the Niagara, cross over to Tonawanda and take our breakfast in Buffalo. By that time, the boys here will be marchin' away toward Lundy's Lane.

ANDREW

*[Walks back and forth, shivering.]*

I 'm afraid.

JOEL

'Fraid? Bosh!

ANDREW

I 'm afraid to face—

JOEL

Face what?—We won't get caught.

ANDREW

Your sister—my wife.

JOEL

Nell!—Why, ain't she comin' here just a-purpose

to get you? Ain't there reason enough, Lord knows?  
Ain't you made up your mind to light out home any-  
how?

ANDREW

Yes; that 's just what she 'll never forgive me for.  
In her heart she 'll never think of me the same. For  
she knows as well as I what pledge I 'll be breaking—  
what sacred pledge.

JOEL

What you mean?

ANDREW

No matter, no matter: this is gush.

*[He returns to the fire and begins to fumble over the contents  
of his knapsack. Joel watches him idly.]*

JOEL

One of *her* curls?

ANDREW

*[Looking at a lock of hair, in the firelight.]*

No; the baby's, little Andy's. Some day they 'll tell  
him how his father—

*[He winces, and puts the lock away.]*

JOEL

*[Going toward the embankment.]*

Listen!

ANDREW

*[Ties up the package, muttering.]*

Son of a traitor!

JOEL

[Tiptoeing back.]

It 's crowed.—That 's her.

*[Leaping to his feet, Andrew stares toward the embankment where the flag is dipped; then turns his back to it, closing his eyes and gripping his hands.]*

*After a pause, silently the figure of a YOUNG WOMAN emerges from the dark and stands on the embankment. She is bareheaded and ill-clad.*

*Joel touches Andrew, who turns and looks toward her. Silently, she steals down to him and they embrace.]*

ANDREW

My Nell!

ELLEN

Nearly a year—

ANDREW

Now, at last!

ELLEN

Hold me close, Andy.

ANDREW

You 're better?

ELLEN

Let 's forget—just for now.

ANDREW

Is he grown much?

ELLEN

Grown?—You should see him! But so ill: What could I do? You see—

ANDREW

I know, I know.

ELLEN

The money was all gone. They turned me out at the old place, and then—

ANDREW

I know, dear.

ELLEN

I got sewing, but when the smallpox—

ANDREW

I have all your letters, Nell. Come, help me to pack.

ELLEN

What! You 're really decided—

JOEL

*[Approaching.]*

Hello, Sis!

ELLEN

*[Absently.]*

Ah, Joel: that you?

*[Eagerly, following Andrew to the knapsack.]*

But my dear—

ANDREW

Just these few things, and we 're off.

ELLEN

*[Agitated.]*

Wait; wait! You don't know yet why I've come—instead of writing.

ANDREW

I can guess.

ELLEN

But you can't: that 's—what 's so hard. I have to tell you something, and then—[*Slowly.*] I must know from your own eyes, from yourself, that you wish to do this, Andrew: that you think it is *right*.

ANDREW

[*Gently.*]

I guessed that.

ELLEN

This is what I must tell you.—It 's not just the sickness, it 's not only the baby, not the money gone—and all that; it 's—it's—

ANDREW

[*Murmurs.*]

My God!

ELLEN

It 's what all that brings—the helplessness: I 've been insulted. Andy—

[*Her voice breaks.*]

—I want a protector.

ANDREW

[*Taking her in his arms, where she sobs.*]

There, dear!

ELLEN

[*With a low moan.*]

You know.

ANDREW

I know.—Come, now: we 'll go.

ELLEN

*[Her face lighting up.]*

Oh!—and you dare? It 's right?

ANDREW

*[Moving from her, with a hoarse laugh.]*

Dare? Dare I be damned by God and all his angels? Ha!—Come, we 're slow.

JOEL

Time enough.

ELLEN

*[Sinking upon Joel's knapsack as a seat, leans her head on her hands, and looks strangely at Andrew.]*

I 'd better have written, I 'm afraid.

ANDREW

*[Controlling his emotion.]*

Now don't take it that way. I 've considered it all.

ELLEN

*[With deep quiet.]*

Blasphemously?

ANDREW

Reasonably, my brave wife. When I enlisted, I did so in a dream. I dreamed I was called to love and serve our country. But that dream is shat-

tered. This sordid war, this political murder, has not one single principle of humanity to excuse its bloody sacrilege. It does n't deserve my loyalty—our loyalty.

ELLEN

Are you saying this—for my sake? What of "God and his angels?"

ANDREW

*[Not looking at her.]*

If we had a just cause—a cause of liberty like that in Seventy-six; if to serve one's country meant to serve God and His angels—then, yes: a man might put away wife and child. He might say: "I will not be a husband, a father; I will be a patriot." But now—like this—tangled in a web of spiders—caught in a grab-net of politicians—and you, you and our baby-boy, like this—hell let in on our home—no, Country be cursed!

ELLEN

*[Slowly.]*

So, then, when little Andy grows up—

ANDREW

*[Groaning.]*

I say that the only thing—

ELLEN

I am to tell him—

ANDREW

*[Defiantly.]*

Tell him his father deserted his country, and thanked God for the chance.

*[Looking about him passionately.]*

Here!

*[He tears a part of the flag from its standard, and reaches it toward her.]*

You 're cold; put this round you.

*[As he is putting the strip of colored silk about her shoulders, there rises, faint yet close by, a sound of fifes and flutes, playing the merry march-strains of "Yankee Doodle."*

*At the same time, there enters along the embankment, dimly, enveloped in a great cloak, a tall FIGURE, which pauses beside the standard of the torn flag, silhouetted against the first pale streaks of the dawn.]*

ELLEN

*[Gazing at Andrew.]*

What 's the matter?

ANDREW

*[Listening.]*

Who are they? Where is it?

JOEL

*[Starts, alertly.]*

He hears something.

ANDREW

Why should they play before daybreak?

ELLEN

Andy—



tered. This sordid war, this political murder, has not one single principle of humanity to excuse its bloody sacrilege. It does n't deserve my loyalty—our loyalty.

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*[Slowly.]*

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ANDREW

Why should they play before daybreak?

ELLEN

Andy—

JOEL

*[Whispers.]*

Ssh! Look out: we 're spied on.

*[He points to the embankment. Andrew and Ellen draw back.]*

THE FIGURE

*[Straightening the flag-standard, and leaning on it.]*

Desartin'?

ANDREW

*[Puts Ellen behind him.]*

Who 's there? The watchword!

THE FIGURE

God save the smart folks!

JOEL

*[To Andrew.]*

He 's on to us. Pickle him quiet, or it 's court-martial!

*[Showing a long knife.]*

Shall I give him this?

ANDREW

*[Taking it from him.]*

No; I will.

ELLEN

*[Seizing his arm.]*

Andrew!

ANDREW

Let go.

*[The Figure, descending into the entrenchment, approaches with face muffled. Joel draws Ellen away. Andrew moves toward the Figure slowly. They meet and pause.]*

You 're a spy!

*[With a quick flash, Andrew raises the knife to strike, but pauses, staring. The Figure, throwing up one arm to ward the blow, reveals—through the parted cloak—a glint of stars in the firelight.]\**

THE FIGURE

Steady, boys: I 'm one of ye. The sergeant told me to drop round.

JOEL

Oh, the sergeant! That 's all right, then.

ANDREW

*[Dropping the knife.]*

Who are you?

THE FIGURE

Who be I? My name, ye mean?—My name 's Average: Sam Average: Univarsal Sam, some o' my prophetic friends calls me.

ANDREW

What are you doing here—now?

*[\*The head and face of the Figure are partly hidden by a beak-shaped cowl. Momentarily, however, when his head is turned toward the fire, enough of the face is discernible to reveal his narrow iron-gray beard, shaven upper lip, aquiline nose, and eyes that twinkle in the dimness.]*

## THE FIGURE

Oh, tendin' to business.

JOEL

Tendin' to *other* folks' business, eh?

THE FIGURE

*[With a touch of weariness.]*

Ye-es; reckon that is my business. Some other folks is me.

JOEL

*[Grimacing to Ellen.]*

Cracked!

THE FIGURE

*[To Andrew.]*

You 're a mite back'ard in wages, ain't ye?

ANDREW

Nine months. What of that?

THE FIGURE

That 's what I dropped round for. Seems like when a man 's endoored and fit, like you have, for his country, and calc'lates he 'll quit, he ought to be takin' a little suthin' hom' for Thanksgivin'. So I fetched round your pay.

ANDREW

My pay! You?

THE FIGURE

Yes; I 'm the paymaster.

ELLEN

*[Coming forward, eagerly.]*

Andy! The money, is it?

THE FIGURE

*[Bows with a grave, old-fashioned stateliness.]*

Your sarvent, Ma'am!

ANDREW

*[Speaking low.]*

Keep back, Nell.

*[To the Figure.]*

You—you were saying—

THE FIGURE

I were about to say how gold bein' scarce down to the Treasury, I fetched ye some s'curities instead: some national I.O.U's, as ye might say.

*[He takes out an old powder horn, and rattles it quietly.]*

That 's them.

*[Pouring from the horn into his palm some glistening, golden grains.]*

Here they be.

ELLEN

*[Peering, with Joel.]*

Gold, Andy!

JOEL

*[With a snigger.]*

Gold—nothin'! That 's corn—just Injun corn: ha!

## THE FIGURE

[*Bowing gravely.*]

It 's the quality, Ma'am, what counts, as ye might say.

JOEL

[*Behind his hand.*]

His top-loft leaks!

## THE FIGURE

These here karnels, now, were give' me down Plymouth way, in Massachusetts, the fust Thanksgiving seems like I can remember. 'T wa'n't long after the famine we had thar. Me bein' some hungry, the red-folks fetched a hull-lot o' this round, with the compliments of their captin'—what were his name now?—Massasoit. This here 's the last handful on 't left. Thought ye might like some, bein' Thanksgiving'.

JOEL

[*In a low voice to Ellen.*]

His screws are droppin' out. Come and pack. We 've got to mark time and skip.

## THE FIGURE

[*Without looking at Joel.*]

Eight or ten minutes still to spare, boys. The sergeant said—wait till ye hear his jew's-harp playin' of that new war tune: *The Star Spangled Banner*. Then ye 'll know the coast 's clear.

## JOEL

Gad, that 's right. I remember now.

*[He draws Ellen away to the knapsack, which they begin to pack. Andrew has never removed his eyes from the tall form in the cloak.]*

*Now, as the Figure pours back the yellow grains from his palm into the powder horn, he speaks, hesitatingly.]*

## ANDREW

I think—I 'd like some.

## THE FIGURE

Some o' what?

## ANDREW

Those—my pay.

## THE FIGURE

*[Cheerfully.]*

So; would ye?

*[Handing him the horn.]*

Reckon that 's enough?

## ANDREW

*[Not taking it.]*

That 's what I want to make sure of—first.

## THE FIGURE

Oh! So ye 're hesitatin'!

## ANDREW

Yes; but I want you to help me decide. Pardon me.



Sir; you 're a stranger; yet somehow I feel I may ask your help. You 've come just in time.

## THE FIGURE

Queer I should a-dropped round jest now, wa'n't it? S'posin' we take a turn.

*[Together they walk toward the embankment.  
By the knapsack, Ellen finds the little frame.]*

## ELLEN

*[To herself.]*

My picture!

*[She looks toward Andrew affectionately.  
Joel, lifting the knapsack, beckons to her.]*

## JOEL

There 's more stuff over here.

*[He goes off, right; Ellen follows him.]*

## ANDREW

*[To the Figure.]*

I should like the judgment of your experience, Sir. I can't quite see your face, yet you appear to be one who has had a great deal of experience.

## THE FIGURE

Why, consid'able some.

## ANDREW

Did you—happen to fight in the late war for independence?

## THE FIGURE

Happen to?

*[Laughing quietly.]*

N-no, not fight: ye see—I was paymaster.

ANDREW

But you went through the war?

## THE FIGURE

Ye-es, oh yes; I went through it. I took out my fust reg'lar papers down to Philadelphie, in '76, seems like 't was the fourth day o' July. But I was paymaster afore that.

ANDREW

Tell me: I 've heard it said there were deserters even in those days, even from the roll-call of Washington. Is it true?

## THE FIGURE

True, boy?—Have ye ever watched a prairie fire rollin' towards ye, billowin' with flame and smoke, and seed all the midget cowerin' prairie-dogs scootin' for their holes? Wall, that 's the way I watched Howe's army sweepin' crosst the Jarsey marshes, and seed the desartin' little patriots, with their chins over their shoulders, skedaddlin' home'ards.

ANDREW

What—the Americans!

## THE FIGURE

All but a handful on 'em—them as weren't canines,

ye might say, but men. *They* set a back-fire goin' at Valley Forge. Most on 'em burnt their toes and fingers off, lightin' on 't thar in the white frost, but they stuck it through and saved—wall, the prairie-dogs.

ANDREW

But they—those others: What reason did they give to God and their own souls for deserting?

THE FIGURE

To who?

ANDREW

To their consciences: What was their reason? It must have been a noble one in Seventy-six. *Their* reason *then*: don't you see, I must have it. I must know what reason real heroes gave for their acts. You were there. You can tell me.

THE FIGURE

*Real* heroes, eh? Look around ye, then: To-day 's the heroic age, and the true brand o' hero is al'ays in the market. Look around ye!

ANDREW

What, here—in this war of jobsters, this petty campaign of monstrous boodle?

THE FIGURE

Thar we be!

ANDREW

Why, here are only a lot of cowardly half-men, like me—lovers of their own folks—their wives and babies at home. They 'll make sacrifices for them. But real

men like our fathers in Seventy-six: they looked in the beautiful face of Liberty, and sacrificed to *her*!

## THE FIGURE

Our fathers, my boy, was jest as fond o' poetry as you be. They talked about the beautiful face o' Liberty same 's you; but when the hom'-made eyes and cheeks of their sweethearts and young uns took to cryin', they desarted their beautiful goddess and skun out hom'.

## ANDREW

But there were some—

## THE FIGURE

Thar was some as didn't—yes; and thar 's some as don't to-day. Those be the folks on my pay-roll. Why, look a-here: I calc'late I wouldn't fetch much on the beauty counter. My talk ain't rhyme stuff, nor the Muse o' Grammar wa'n't my schoolma'am. Th' ain't painter nor clay-sculptor would pictur' me jest like I stand. For the axe has hewed me, and the plough has furred; and the arnin' of gold by my own elbow-grease has give' me the shrewd eye at a bargain. I manure my crops this side o' Jordan, and as for t'other shore, I 'd ruther swap jokes with the Lord than listen to his sarmons. And yet for the likes o' me, jest for to arn my wages—ha, the many, many boys and gals that 's gone to their grave-beds, and when I a-closed their eyes, the love-light was shinin' thar.

ANDREW

*[Who has listened, with awe.]*What *are* you? What *are* you?

THE FIGURE

Me? I 'm the pay-master.

ANDREW

I want to serve you—like those others.

THE FIGURE

Slow, slow, boy! Nobody sarves *me*.

ANDREW

But they died for you—the others.

THE FIGURE

No, 't wa'n't for me: 't was for him as pays the wages: the one as works through me—the one higher up. I 'm only the pay-master: kind of a needful makeshift—his obedient sarvent.

ANDREW

*[With increasing curiosity, seeks to peer in the Figure's face.]*

But the one up higher—who is he?

THE FIGURE

*[Turning his head away.]*

Would ye sarve him, think, if ye heerd his voice?

ANDREW

*[Ardently, drawing closer.]*

And saw his face!

[Drawing his cowl lower and taking Andrew's arm, the Figure leads him up on the embankment, where they stand together.]

## THE FIGURE

Hark a-yonder!

ANDREW

[Listening.]

Is it thunder?

## THE FIGURE

Have ye forgot?

ANDREW

The voice! I remember now:—Niagara!

[With awe, Andrew looks toward the Figure, who stands shrouded and still, facing the dawn. From far off comes a sound as of falling waters, and with that—a deep, murmurous voice, which seems to issue from the Figure's cowl.]

## THE VOICE

I am the Voice that was heard of your fathers, and your fathers' fathers. Mightier—mightier, I shall be heard of your sons. I am the Million in whom the one is lost, and I am the One in whom the millions are saved. Their ears shall be shut to my thunders, their eyes to my blinding stars. In shallow streams they shall tap my life-blood for gold. With dregs of coal and of copper they shall pollute me. In the mystery of my mountains they shall assail me; in the majesty of my forests, strike me down; with engine and der-rick and mill-stone, bind me their slave. Some for a

lust, some for a love, shall desert me. One and one, for his own, shall fall away. Yet one and one and one shall return to me for life; the deserter and the destroyer shall re-create me. Primeval, their life-blood is mine. My pouring waters are passion, my lightnings are laughter of man. I am the One in whom the millions are saved, and I am the Million in whom the one is lost.

ANDREW

*[Yearningly, to the Figure.]*

Your face!

*[The Figure turns majestically away. Andrew clings to him.]*

Your face!

*[In the shadow of the flag, the Figure unmuffles for an instant. Peering, dazzled, Andrew staggers back, with a low cry, and, covering his eyes, falls upon the embankment.*

*From away, left, the thrumming of a jew's-harp is heard, playing "The Star Spangled Banner."*

*From the right, enter Joel and Ellen.*

*Descending from the embankment, the Figure stands apart.]*

JOEL

Well, Colonel Average, time 's up.

ELLEN

*[Seeing Andrew's prostrate form, hastens to him.]*

Andy! What 's happened?

ANDREW

*[Rising slowly.]*

Come here. I 'll whisper it.

*[He leads her beside the embankment, beyond which the dawn is beginning to redden.]*

JOEL

Yonder 's the sergeant's jew's harp. That 's our signal, Nell. So long, Colonel.

THE FIGURE

*[Nodding.]*

So long, sonny.

ANDREW

*[Holding Ellen's hands, passionately.]*

You understand? You *do*?

ELLEN

*[Looking in his eyes.]*

I understand, dear.

*[They kiss each other.]*

JOEL

*[Calls low.]*

Come, you married turtles. The road 's clear. Follow me now. Sneak.

*[Carrying his knapsack, Joel climbs over the embankment, and disappears.]*

*The thrumming of the jew's-harp continues.*

*Ellen, taking the strip of silk flag from her shoulders, ties it to the standard.]*

ANDREW

*[Faintly.]*

God bless you!



ELLEN

*[As they part hands.]*

Good-bye!

*[The Figure has remounted the embankment, where—in the distincter glow of the red dawn—the grey folds of his cloak, hanging from his shoulders, resemble the half-closed wings of an eagle, the beaked cowl falling, as a kind of visor, before his face, concealing it.]*

THE FIGURE

Come, little gal.

*[Ellen goes to him, and hides her face in the great cloak. As she does so, he draws from it a paper, writes on it, and hands it to Andrew, with the powder horn.]*

By the bye, Andy, here 's that s'curity. Them here 's my initials: they 're all what 's needful. Jest file this in the right pigeonhole, and you 'll draw your pay.—Keep your upper lip, boy. I'll meet ye later, mebbe, at Lundy's Lane.

ANDREW

*[Wistfully.]*

You 'll take her home?

THE FIGURE

Yes: reckon she 'll housekeep for your uncle, till you get back; won't ye, Nellie? Come, don't cry, little gal. We 'll soon git 'quainted. 'T ain't the fust time sweethearts has called me *Uncle*.

*[Flinging back his great cloak, he throws one wing of it, with his arm, about her shoulders, thus with half its reverse*

*side draping her with shining stripes and stars. By the same action, his own figure is made partly visible—the legs clad in the tight, instep-strapped trousers [blue and white] of the Napoleonic era. Holding the girl gently to him—while her face turns back toward Andrew—he leads her, silhouetted against the sunrise, along the embankment, and disappears.*

*Meantime the thrumming twang of the jew's-harp grows sweeter, mellow, modulated with harmonies that, filling now the air with elusive strains of the American war-hymn, mingle with the faint dawn-twitterings of birds.*

*Andrew stares silently after the departed forms; then, slowly coming down into the entrenchment, lifts from the ground his gun and ramrod, leans on the gun, and—reading the paper in his hand by the growing light—mutters it aloud:*

*U. S. A.*

*Smiling sternly, he crumples the paper in his fist, makes a wad of it, and rams it into his gun-barrel.*

**FINIS.**



## **NOTE**

## NOTE FOR "THE ANTICK."

In her scene with John, Julie Bonheur sings snatches of the following two songs, popular among the Canadian French for generations, and still sung by them. The music to both may be found in Ernest Gagnon's "Chansons Populaires du Canada," pages 124 and 151.

### TENAOUICHE TENAGA, OUICH'KA!

C'était un vieux sauvage  
Tout noir, tout barbouilla,  
    Ouch'ka!  
Avec sa vieill' couverte  
Et son sac à tabac.  
    Ouch'ka!  
Ah! ah! tenaouich' tenaga,  
Tenaouich' tenaga, ouich'ka!

Avec sa vieill' couverte  
Et son sac à tabac.  
    Ouch'ka!  
—Ton camarade est more,  
Est mort et enterra.  
    Ouch'ka!  
Ah! ah! tenaouich' tenaga,  
Tenaouich' tenaga, ouich'ka!

Ton camarade est more,  
Est mort et enterra.  
    Ouch'ka!  
C'est quatre vieux sauvages  
Qui port'nt les coins du drap.  
    Ouch'ka!  
Ah! ah! tenaouich' tenaga,  
Tenaouich' tenaga, ouich'ka!

C'est quatre vieux sauvages  
Qui port'nt les coins du drap.  
    Ouch'ka!

Et deux vieill's sauvagesses  
Qui chant'nt le *libera*.

Ouich'ka!

Ah! ah! tenaouich' tenaga,  
Tenaouich' tenaga, ouich'ka!

### AH! QUI MARIERONS-NOUS?

Ah! qui mari'rons-nous? [*bis*]  
Mademoisell', ce sera vous,  
Par l'assemblée' d'amour.  
Oui j'aimerai qui m'aim . qui m'aime .  
Oui j'aimerai qui m'aimera.

'Lui donn'rons pour epoux? [*bis*]  
Mon doux Monsieur, ce sera vous,  
Par l'assemblée' d'amour.  
Oui j'aimerai, etc.

Amours, saluez vous! [*bis*]  
Saluez vous cinq ou six coups,  
Par l'assemblée' d'amour.  
Oui j'aimerai, etc.

Amours, retirez vous! [*bis*]  
Retirez vous chacun chez vous,  
Par l'assemblée' d'amour.  
Oui j'aimerai qui m'aim . qui m'aime .  
Oui j'aimerai qui m'aimera.

### The refrain

Oui j'aimerai qui m'aim . qui m'aime .  
Oui j'aimerai qui m'aimera

is lilted by Julie, as she dances on the grass by the  
wayside.

